

F. M.

THE
LADIES MONITOR:
OR,
INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE
FAIR SEX.

Written in FRENCH by the celebrated
Madam DE MAINTENON,
For the USE of the
YOUNG LADIES of St. CYR;
And now first Translated into ENGLISH
By Mr. ROLLOS.



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Written & Translated by the celebrated

Abdram de M. A. N. T. N. O. N.

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And now into English

By M. R. O. L. L. O. S.



D U E I N I M

M. A. N. T. N. O. N.



THE
EDITOR'S
ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Name alone of the Authoress of this Work is sufficient to secure these DIALOGUES a favourable Reception from the Public. Every one reveres the Memory of Madam DE MAINTENON, and the young Ladies of *St. Cyr*, into whose Hands this Book may chance to fall, will I am persuaded thank the Editor for recalling her once more to their Remembrance. This illustrious Foundress has a thousand Times expressed the Satisfaction she enjoyed in the Company of her Pupils, in the familiar Conferences she had with them, and in prescribing them such Lessons as seemed calculated entirely for their Entertainment. In the Perusal of this Volume will be seen that admirable Spirit of Wisdom, Affability, and Religion which inspired that Lady, and which has ever influenced the Conduct of those who have succeeded her.

THE

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reader may perhaps be curious enough to enquire by what Means the Manuscript came into my Possession. Those who were entrusted with it, as a Pledge of Friendship and Regard, cannot in the least be accused of a Breach in either of these Respects. Madam DE MAINTENON knew too well the Force of Friendship; and her Intention, it may be thought, was that it should never see the Light. Many will perhaps imagine, that these DIALOGUES proceed from a Pen less assiduous than her's was. I have no Reply to offer, except that these Manuscripts were sent me by Persons of Credit, who have more Regard for themselves, than to hazard their own Reputation, by imposing on the Public; and are too careful of that of the Authoress, and conscious of the Advantages Youth may imbibe from their Instruction, to suffer a Work capable at once of giving Pleasure and Improvement, to be buried in the Ruins of perpetual Oblivion.

THE

DIALOGUES

Madam DE MAINTENON.

DIALOGUE I.

On SOCIETY.

Violetta.

ALADY speaking of another, said she was sociable; I should be glad to know the Signification of that Word.

Lucinda. I should rather have said she was fit for Society, and that is a sufficient Commendation.

Angelica. Pray be kind enough to explain this Sort of Commendation to us.

Lucinda. One that is agreeable in Company, that often contributes to render it engaging, and is never a Burden to it.

Violetta. I would fain be particularly informed, What it is to render Society agreeable, and what to make it burdensome?

Clarissa. I am of Opinion, that to be agreeable in Company, and make Society a Pleasure, it is requisite to have Wit.

Lucinda. Wit alone is not sufficient; you may be possessed of that, and yet not qualified for Conversation.

Violetta. How d'ye mean? Is it possible to please without Wit?

Lucinda. Yes, one may at least be inoffensive; and if we can never contribute to the Pleasure

sure of the Company, we may however always avoid giving Uneasiness.

Clarissa. To describe a Person fit for Society, we must repeat an infinite Number of engaging Qualifications.

Violetta. No Matter, provided they tend to our Edification.

Lucinda. To be fit for Society then, requires Complaisance, good Nature, and good Manners.

Angelica. What! to be always employed in Complimenting?

Belinda. Do you imagine that good Manners consist in Compliments?

Violetta. I always thought so.

Lucinda. No, Madam; the highest good Breeding displays itself in accommodating our Tempers to those with whom we live, or have the least Connection.

Angelica. In what Manner, pray?

Lucinda. By never injuring them, by conforming to their Wills, and never contradicting them in Word, or Deed.

Angelica. Must I then never declare my Opinion, but always be governed by that of others?

Clarissa. You may hold an Argument to enliven the Discourse, but you must never seem angry.

Violetta. If others are angry, is that my Fault?

Lucinda. Yes, if you have said any Thing ill-natur'd, disobliging, or unpolite.

Angelica. I begin to understand the Commendation of being sociable, and find it requires all Kinds of good Qualities.

Clarissa. True; and whenever you observe the Company of any one every where coveted, and approved of for a long Time together, you may immediately conclude that Person is not without Merit.

Violetta. Oblige us with the Picture of a Person fit for Society.

Lucinda.

Lucinda. She has a proper Share of Wit, is sweet temper'd, obliging, conformable to the Dispositions of others, willing to engage in any Diversion with her Companions, tho' not perhaps suitable to her Taste; will walk abroad, stay at home, talk, keep silence, work; she listens attentively to what is said to her, and doth not intrude upon the Attention of others, by talking too long at a Time; she is not inquisitive, nor desirous of knowing any Thing, till thought fitting to be revealed to her; she never enquires into what doth not concern her, is never angry, and doth not repeat what appears displeasing to another; she commends what deserves Praise, and is silent with Respect to any Error she discovers; she hears with Patience repeated what she knew before, without seeming to be pre-acquainted with it, chusing rather to endure the Repetition, than deprive the Person of the Pleasure she intends herself in relating a Piece of News. In short, I should never have done, should I go about to mention every Requisite to become a proper Member of Society.

Angelica. I should be glad to hear now the Description of a clownish Character.

Lucinda. I am ashamed of talking so much, and shall therefore desire *Clarissa* to favour us with it.

Clarissa. It is very easily done, for she is the absolute Reverse of the Character you have just defin'd: Herself alone is the Object of her Care, she is regardless of others, she takes the chief Place; when at Table she helps herself to the best and choicest of the Entertainment, she is ever talking of herself, is soon provoked to Anger, makes Remarks on whatever passes, and gives her Sentiments accordingly; she is obstinate to her own Opinion, domineers, is conceited, cannot bear the least Opposition, and would always

make her Will the Standard of other People's Actions.

Angelica. You have said enough to convince me, that such a Person can never be an Object of Desire, I should really detest such a one.

Violetta. We are greatly obliged to these Ladies, for informing our Minds of Affairs so likely to be useful to us.

Lucinda. 'Tis only for want of due Consideration, that you have not before made this Observation, for you have had Experience enough to know that the Persons you either approve or dislike, bear some Resemblance we have given of them.

DIALOGUE II.

On REASON.

Julia. **W**ERE I myself excepted from the Party, I might say that Chance has this Day brought together a very agreeable Company.

Arabella. I should willingly acquiesce in the same Opinion.

Lucetta. For my Part I am very well satisfied to make one, for if I have not sufficient Merits of my own, I do not think myself totally unworthy, having a Relish for the Conversation of reasonable People.

Sophronia. How seldom are such to be met with! It seems to me that Wit is much easier to be found than Reason.

Eloisa. I am quite of your Mind.

Amelia. Wit may entertain us for a while, and Reason is only displeasing when it thwarts our

our Inclinations; but for a continual Guest, Reason must ever be allowed the Preference.

Sophronia. How is it possible to love what contradicts us?

Julia. Because tho' it condemns us upon some Occasions, on others it justifies us; and surely nothing can be more grateful, than the Sanction of a rational Being.

Amelia. Reason wears commonly an Air of Gravity, and opposes our Pleasures.

Lucetta. Is it not often mistaken for Austerity?

Julia. Yes, that is frequently the Case; we form a frightful Idea of it, whereas, nothing is more lovely than Reason.

Elouisa. Don't you observe that those who are always reasoning are troublesome?

Julia. If they are always reasoning, they are unreasonable, for we should not reason continually.

Sophronia. Why so? What Talants can we better employ in Conversation?

Julia. Good Breeding, Mirth, Recreation, Taciturnity, Condescension, and Attention to others.

Lucetta. You give us a very pleasing Idea of Reason thus accompanied.

Julia. I do not look upon Reason in the formidable Light it is usually misrepresented, as pedantic, harsh and critical: For she indulges every one in their proper Place; she loves to see Children delight themselves with Baubles, young People take innocent Diversions, nor does she deny a proper Relaxation even to old Age.

Arabella. You have adorned her with all her sprightly Graces; let us now behold her in a more serious Dress.

Julia. She accommodates herself to all Tempers, compassionates the Failings of others, and lessens her own; she gives Comfort under Afflic-

tions, having foreseen they would arrive ; she is moderate in her Pleasures, she delights in Society, and agreeably enjoys it ; she is thankful in Health, nor dejected in Sickness ; she makes good Use of Prosperity, and bears Adversity with Equanimity and Resolution ; she enjoys Contentment herself, and diffuses it wherever she goes ; and as far as is compatible, she draws Advantages from the most insupportable Misfortunes.

Eloisa. This is certainly a beautiful Copy, and I really think no one can be better acquainted with the Original, than yourself.

Julia. I have only given you a Sketch of her Beauties, nor indeed do I know the full Extent of them.

Lucetta. You place her then in the foremost Rank of Virtue.

Julia. Yes, certainly ; we can never enjoy her too much ; we ought to cultivate her, if we would eucrease her Value, for there is nothing so convenient and advantageous, both for ourselves and others.

Arabella. You do not surely prefer her to Religion.

Julia. No, because Religion of itself is sufficient to Salvation without Reason. But Religion would have much greater Efficacy, if regulated by Reason : Religion may be changed, but Reason is unalterable : Religion may be accompanied with Indiscretion, but Reason cannot.

Sophronia. I think, indeed, you are partially fond of Reason, in preferring her to all the other Virtues.

Julia. The Virtues have great Need of Reason for their Guide, to prevent their running into Extremes.

Eloisa. What Effect would all your Reason have against ill Fortune ?

Julia.

Julia. She enables us to endure it with greater Fortitude, and makes the afflicted Person so estimable and engaging, that she may easily find Friends to allay her Grief.

Lucetta. *Alicia* is endowed with a great Share of Reason, Has she therefore more Happiness in her Retirement?

Julia. You need make no Doubt of it; she finds a Satisfaction in her Reflections, she sees there are other Conditions in Life more miserable than her own; she concludes at Night that the Day of Happiness is over with others, as well as herself, and that none of their Pleasures are without Intermission of Pain; she maketh herself beloved by every Person who enjoys her Company, because her whole Study is to be agreeable; she is conformable to their Taste, their Manners and their Rules; and they, on the other Hand, endeavour to soften and alleviate her Sorrows.

Arabella. You suppose then that the rest are also reasonable?

Julia. It is impossible but Reason must engage and charm even the most savage Dispositions.

Lucetta. You attribute then to Reason, all that can be said of Wisdom, Integrity, and Good-Sense.

Julia. If you were to call all these by one Name, it would be no great Impropriety.

Eloisa. But, pray, Whence do we derive this Reason?

Julia. It comes from God, who may properly be called the Fountain of Reason.

Julia. Let her then preside over our Conduct, for speculative Reason is in Fact no Reason at all.

Amelia. I must confess you have reconciled her to me, and the Manner in which you have described her is very different from my former Sentiments of her; she indeed appeared so very formidable,

ble, that had she offered herself to my Service, she would have met with a Repulse; let us then each of us begin to cultivate an Acquaintance with her in our private Hours of Reflection.

Lucetta. Let us however remember Miss *Julia's* Observation, that to reason speculatively, that is in our Meditations or Conference, is to no Purpose, unless we reduce our Reason to Practice, by suffering it to influence all our Actions.

Amelia. But, consider, Madam, we are not always Mistresses of ourselves to regulate our Conduct by Reason, and we are sometimes obliged to espouse a Cause, which Reason would not approve; we depend on the Will of others; a Husband might be apt to be too profuse in his Expences, without considering the Damage he thereby sustains in his Fortune; and a Mother sends us abroad into the World, when Reason, if consulted, might perhaps advise Retirement.

Lucetta. We have been just now informed that Reason draws Advantages from every Circumstance; and in the two Instances you have selected, it will be found to comply with the Dispositions of those on whom it depends, and to regard the World as little as possible; so that a Person without Reason will be at a Loss in either of the above Cases.

Julia. This Subject is an inexhaustible one, and produce as many Instances as you please, you will still find that Reason will have the upper Hand, and that she is very serviceable on whatever Occasion she is employ'd or introduc'd.

DIALOGUE III.

On RESTRAINT.

Melliora. WELL, Ladies, our gossiping Time is now arrived, and first let me entreat your Sentiments upon true Happiness.

Melissa. Mine would consist in Riches.

Lucretia. And mine in being placed in a Condition above all my Acquaintance.

Lucilla. And mine, in a continual Round of Diversions.

Charlotte. My Happiness would consist in being always free from Restraint.

Melliora. None of these Situations can be happy; and one of these can have no possible Existence.

Melissa. Which is that?

Melliora. That of being free from Restraint; for I am of Opinion, that there are no Persons in the World (Ideots excepted) but what are some Time or other liable to this Inconvenience.

Charlotte. That is to affirm that there is no such Thing as Happiness?

Leonora. It must be confessed indeed, that there is no perfect Happiness on Earth, but there are many Persons notwithstanding, who do not deem themselves unfortunate, because they are subject to a little Restraint.

Charlotte. Indeed, I don't know a greater Misfortune.

Melliora. That's because you are unacquainted with any others; when you have experienced greater Ills, this will appear extremely trivial.

Charlotte. But, pray, now Madam, is there no Condition of Life exempt from Restraint?

Lucretia. If I were placed in a Sphere above every Body else, Who would then have the Power to restrain my Inclinations?

Leonora. I am of Opinion, that the most exalted Stations are the most subject to Restraint.

Melissa. Do you imagine the King is ever under Restraint?

Melliora. Perpetually so.

Charlotte. Permit me, dear Madam, to tell you, that you carry the Matter too far; he cannot, at least, be restrained in his Pleasures, for if that was the Case they would not deserve the Name.

Melliora. If I exaggerate, you cannot but own that you run into as great Extremes, in supposing the least Restraint will deprive him of all his Pleasure.

Melissa. Let us return to the King, and oblige us so far, as to let us know wherein he is restrained?

Leonora. He rises at a set Hour for the Interest of his Subjects, when it is not unlikely, if he were to pursue the Dictates of his own Will, that he would sometimes rise earlier, or take longer Repose; he puts on his regal Robes to appear in public for the Pleasure of his Nobles, when, perhaps, he would often rather be alone; he dines likewise for the same Reason in public.

Melliora. He laboureth with his Ministers, and that not always with Satisfaction; he sees Foreigners, gives Audiences, hears Affairs disagreeable and troublesome; And can all this be done without Restraint?

Leonora. He follows the Chase, or other Recreations, where he must often be accompanied with those who are displeasing to him, to avoid offending some, or giving Umbrage to others, who are elevated to the most distinguished Places under

under him; and must, perhaps, discard those whom he wishes near his Person, for fear of exciting Jealousy; in a Word, he is absolutely under a continual Restraint.

Melissa. After such a Description of him, I'll never desire to be a King; give me the Lot of an humble Peasant.

Melliora. We must be constrained to work, when we would be glad to repose ourselves; we must be obliged to stay at Home in our Family, when, sometimes, contrary to our Inclinations; we must live in Amity with our Neighbours; we must be complaisant to our Inferiors as well as Superiors; in short, we are entirely, and in every Particular, liable to Restraint.

Charlotte. What would be the Consequence, if I should refuse to comply with any of these Injunctions?

Leonora. You would be hated, insupportable, scorn'd, despis'd, and avoided by all the World.

Charlotte. Really, Madam, you astonish me! But if it be then impossible to avoid Restraint, tell us, I beg you, how we may support it?

Melliora. The best Way of supporting it is, I think, to expect it, and accustom ourselves to it.

Charlotte. And what mighty Recompence may we expect for such a Martyrdom?

Melliora. This Martyrdom (as you please to term it) wears off every Day by Degrees, as *Leonora* has already demonstrated, and we are amply rewarded with the Satisfaction of procuring universal Love and Esteem; And is all this to be accounted as nothing?

Leonora. It is an Inconvenience against which there is no Remedy; and if we would be free from Restraint, we must take up our Abode in a Desert.

Lucilla. You induce me to wish for such a Retreat

treat by the Impossibility you represent of living uncontroul'd.

Melliora. 'Tis in your Power to make Choice of the two Evils ; for my Part, I believe Retirement in a 'Desart would not afford you any great Satisfaction.

Lucretia. I never before dreamt of Restraint, except in Childhood, or in a Nunnery.

Leonora. Believe me, Madam, you will one Day confess, that those were the most happy and joyful Days that ever you knew in your Life.

DIALOGUE. IV.

ON SELF LOVE.

Sophia. **I** AM afraid, Madam, we interrupt the Pleasure you have promised yourself in reading.

Eliza. Not in the least, by dear *Sophia* ; I assure you, I shall receive much greater Delight in your improving Conversation.

Lavinia. May I be so free, my dear, as to enquire the Subject which engrosses your present Attention?

Eliza. 'Tis a Treatise wherein all the World is more or less concerned ; for the Subject is Self-Love.

Sophia. I believe, indeed, there are very few who do not possess it in some Degree.

Eliza. 'Tis a great Pity it should be so, since it renders us displeasing in the Sight of our Creator, and obnoxious to Mankind.

Lavinia. I am very sensible, that by indulging this Passion we offend God, who is alone the proper Object of our Regard ; But why should it be held in Ahorrence by Men, who are alike guilty of the same Frailty?

Eliza.

Eliza. That is the very Reason they dislike it in us; for this Partiality to ourselves makes us fond of repeating it; and in so doing, we grow wearisome to our Friends; by our veneration for our own Persons, we become prejudiced in Favour of our own Opinions, and assert them with Obstinacy, to the no small Displeasure of others.

Clarinda. Your Observation is just, and this same Self-Love makes us willing to attribute to ourselves a Superiority in every Respect.

Alinda. True, and gives all our Concerns an Air of Importance.

Lavinia. But are we then required to neglect ourselves? That is both unnatural and unreasonable, and what we shall not be easily prevailed on to do.

Eliza. No, certainly, we can never be entirely of this Way of Thinking; but we must endeavour after it however, and entertain as little Esteem for ourselves as possible.

Lavinia. If I was wholly to neglect myself, I should commit Follies from Morning to Night; and really, Madam, I cannot conceive how you can reconcile this Neglect you require of us, with that necessary Caution we should continually take to keep a Guard over our Actions.

Eliza. Nothing can be easier; for one of the chief Motives to be watchful of our Actions, is, that we may avoid every Inducement to Self-Love.

Lavinia. But 'tis this same Self-Love which makes me fond of Commendation, and if I was even to get the better of that, I should then be negligent in my Endeavours to deserve Applause.

Clarinda. What, Would you then be good only for the Sake of Praise?

Lavinia. Why, dear Madam, Should I lay a Restraint on my Inclinations, if I was not desirous

firous of procuring the Esteem of People of Honour and Probity?

Alinda. I know not whether it may not be of bad Consequence to teach young Persons to despise Praise.

Sophia. It is what we call Emulation, and is only to be found in great Minds.

Clarinda. And is it unnecessary then that we should be in Love with Virtue, and the Pleasure of doing well?

Alinda. This is a Sentiment truly noble, and I am afraid of too refined a Nature for the Capacity of Youth.

Cleora. I am apt to think, that the much greater Part of meritorious Deeds are done only with the View of gaining Applause, and that this very Aim has made so many Heroes.

Eliza. All your Virtue then is only the Effect of Vanity; and if you were not to be seen, you would commit every Crime that should suggest itself to your Mind.

Lavinia. I should not be guilty of any great Crimes, because I am not viciously inclined; but I should be less upon my Guard against trivial Errors.

Clarinda. What, then, perhaps, you would be passionate, slothful, irregular, indiscreet, obstinate, and unsufferable.

Lavinia. Yes, Madam, if I could expect no Commendation for avoiding those Vices.

Clarinda. I can't comprehend this.

Alinda. For my Part, I understand the Lady's Meaning very well, and I can't conceive, that Heroes would have spent their early Days in the Toils of War, and at the Hazard of their Lives, if they had not this Thirst for Admiration.

Eliza. What are they now the better for it, Madam?

Lavinia.

Lavinia. Their Memory is held in continual Veneration, and their Example proposed on every Occasion.

Eliza. Have they any Sense of this Satisfaction? Or, do they enjoy more Happiness on this Account?

Lavinia. No, Madam; but pray, From what Motive then would you have us act?

Eliza. You can judge of that, Madam, better than myself, and you have too much good Sense, to lay yourself under a Restraint all your Life, merely for the Sake of Praise, when you are already certain of obtaining it.

Alinda. Yet would you not have us careful to please, and seek the Esteem of those on whom we depend?

Eliza. I don't desire to hinder your doing all this, but I would have you act with a more substantial View.

Lavinia. You would have our Actions only pleasing to God;—I am very ready to allow this is the most rational Aim, but at present, we are not discoursing of Religion, but Morality.

Eliza. And what is Morality, when it has not Religion for its Basis? You are, I see, still resolved to gain only the good Opinion of Men, and that alone will never constitute our Happiness.

Lavinia. I account their Esteem of great Value.

Eliza. I tell you again, Madam, you must despair of attaining it without the Possession of substantial Merit.

Lavinia. What do you call substantial?

Eliza. That which will endure for ever.

Alinda. You will insist on too consummate a Perfection in our Dealings, and subject us to disagreeable Restraint.

Eliz. I would have you on the contrary enjoy all possible Liberty; I would have you always
satisfied

satisfied, pleased to be applauded, and contented, tho' neglected, and ever assured of a Recompence for every good Action.

Lavinia. I submit, Madam, on Condition you can prove that there is really such a Condition to be found.

Eliza. To this End, we need only consult the Divine Approbation, to dedicate all our Service to God alone, to rely upon him, and in every Thing we do, to have him alone for our Object.

Lavinia. And is this what you call Liberty?

Eliza. Most certainly, Madam; and if you will once make the Experiment, you may be convinced of it: You will never be in Pain to procure the Good-Will of Mankind; your Conscience will justify you in doing your Duty;—if Men approve your Actions, their Approbation is welcome; if not, you may console yourself, being still certain of obtaining those Praises which have no End: You may even indulge yourself in Self-Love so far as is consistent with your Duty to God: You may be careful of your own Happiness, and indulge every innocent Enjoyment, and then you will be sure you have not exceeded the proper Bounds of this Self-Esteem, while you continue to act in a State of Dependance upon his Omnipotence.

Lavinia. I find you thought it impossible that I should yield to Conviction, without being allowed a small Share of Love for my dear Self; but, really, Madam, I am quite charmed with your engaging Discourse, and will treasure up your Maxims in my Mind, whence they shall never be erased.

DIALOGUE V.

ON GOOD SENSE.

Elvira. I HAVE met with great Difficulty, Ladies, in finding one that could determine the Difference between Wit and Good-Sense.

Valeria. I think I comprehend it, but I cannot explain it so clearly as I could wish.

Jacintha. I take Wit to be a Ray of Light more or less extended, which gives us a Taste for every Thing wherein it appears, and from which it is reflected, elevating our Ideas, and making Conversation delightful, and contributing reciprocally to its own Pleasure, and that of others.

Emilia. By the agreeable Description you have given of it, Madam, it is very evident that you possess it in the most extensive Manner! I doubt not, but you will as easily define Good-Sense.

Jacintha. I shall deliver my Sentiments of it freely;—Good-Sense, I think, consists in setting proper Bounds to our Wit, in complying with other People's Tempers, in making their Wills our own, in approving solid and rational Joys, in proportioning our Expences to our Finances, in partaking Pleasures with those who enjoy them, in passing our Time chearfully with those who do not, and in concealing the Advantages we reap from our Superiority in Wit.

Emilia. The Properties you attribute to Good-Sense are exactly the same as I should have ascribed to Wisdom and Reason, had I undertaken their Definition.

Valeria. Really, I should have been at a Loss to have made the Distinction.

Horatia. Nevertheless, Madam, there are Persons

sons who have but a small Share of Wit, that are prudent, equal, and discreet.

Fuletta. True; but you must however allow, that Wit enables us to discern more clearly than others.

Maria. The Decorum which Custom has prescribed to our Sex, obliges us to set Bounds to our Wit, rather than to exert it more extensively, and we shall always see clearly enough, if we can be persuaded there is nothing worthy our Regard, but eternal Salvation; and to choose such a State of Life as may secure this Blessing to us in the most effectual Manner.

Melinda. You agree then, I find, in the Opinion of those who would deny our Sex the Use of Learning? I cannot conceive what Pleasure can be derived from the Company of those who are unacquainted with History, or know not the current News of the Day;—Women who are so devoted to their domestic Concerns, that they can't tell the Difference between an Ode, an Elegy, or an Epic Poem.

Maria. What Service is it to a Female, to know this Difference? I am wholly ignorant of the Matter, nor am I desirous of learning it, provided I can give Satisfaction to those on whom I depend.

Melinda. Alas! How can you take Delight in working from Morning till Night at an Employment continually the same? In picking a Piece of Stuff to Pieces, and drawing to and fro a Needle and Thread! How mean and unworthy of a young Lady, born for a nobler Purpose! Indeed, I could never bring myself to such Exercise.

Elvira. And I, Madam, can employ myself therein with Pleasure: While I am at my Business, I have no Solicitude to enquire into the Concerns of others; I enjoy the Satisfaction of beholding

beholding my Work go forward; and when it is finished, the Pleasure of having done something: I am not exposed to invidious Conversation, wherein I may be induced to offend God; I never indulge myself in Sloth, which would only bring Vexation; and when I take a Review of my past Transactions, I am pleased to reflect, that I can't reproach myself with having been idle, or with spending my Time in unprofitable Discourses: I go to Bed contented, and sleep in undisturbed Tranquility.

Melinda. By what you represent, you are very fond of notable Women.

Elvira. Indeed, I am; they are greatly in my Esteem.

Melinda. I know not what Taste you may have for Oeconomy, but for my Part I could never be prevailed on to do the Duties of a Farmer's Wife. What, Could I rise betimes in the Morning, like Country Housewives, who get up to send their Servants to work, and condescend themselves to undergo the most slavish Drudgery?

Maria. She that acts in this Manner, is truly prudent: She imitates the wise Woman spoken of by Solomon.

Melinda. You would then be in your proper Element, to live at Home with your Mother, to keep the Keys, and have the Care of the Household.

Maria. Don't make a Jest of me, Madam, I would do all this, and should think I could not be better employed.

Melinda. Indeed, I would not do it for all the World, What! Should I, who am possessed of Wit and Sense, debase myself by such a Condescension! I can only enjoy myself with Rhetoricians, Poets, Philosophers, and the whole Class of refin'd Wits.

Maria.

Maria. And I can reap no Satisfaction, but from the Discharge of my Duty.

Melinda. Your Life must then be very tedious to you, and you will be continually a Slave to your Duty.

Maria. I am happier than you, Madam, for I pursue my own Inclinations, by resolving to do nothing but what I ought; and you are not always sure of meeting with such Company as you could wish.

Melinda. Why so, Madam?

Maria. Because you are fond of none but your sublime Genius's, and you will meet with very few of them so highly accomplished as you could desire.

Melinda. Suppose me now with Persons of E-rudition, who never discourse on common To-picks.

Valeria. Pray, tell me then, Do you find in them a discerning Judgment?

Melinda. Imagine then that I am entertaining myself with Astrologers.

Maria. Do you make Good-Sense consist in the Knowledge of Astrology? Proper Persons indeed to pretend an Acquaintance with the Stars, and talk of describing to us their Course, when they know not how to regulate their own Conduct!

Melinda. You are in the right; and your Arguments are so powerful, that if I stay to hear you any longer, I fear I shall become a Convert to your Way of Thinking.

Maria. I shall be very glad of it, for you will then grow wiser and happier; but we ought not to content ourselves with human Wisdom, which will go ever unrewarded; but endeavour to attain that only which has God for its Foundation and End.

Melinda. So then you are not satisfied with my being

being wise, but you would have me be religious also?

Maria. That's because 'tis impossible to be one without the other, and we form but weak Notions of our true Interest, if we content ourselves with such Wisdom that can never hope for its Reward.

DIALOGUE VI.

ON AMBITION.

Seraphina. **I** MUST desire the Favour of your Opinion, in an Affair wherein I have just been interested; this Lady and myself had Occasion to pass thro' a certain Place, where were assembled a Multitude of People; several of them bowed to me, I returned the Compliment; upon which she ridiculed me; telling me at the same Time, that none but Persons of Quality were worthy of the Honour of a Salute.

Almeria. I should have immediately condemned the Lady, for I cannot think we are worthy of a Compliment unless we return it.

Camilla. What, to such Wretches? And would you set them on a Footing with People of Fashion?

Almeria. My Respect is proportioned to those on whom I bestow it; but I must own I had much rather be guilty of an Excess of Complaisance, than commit a Breach of good Manners.

Camilla. You are not very ambitious.

Almeria. I am always so, but I look upon Rudeness as a false Ambition.

Sacharissa. Can a Christian then be endued with a true Ambition?

Almeria. Christian Humility is not inconsistent with Honour, Honesty, Disinterestedness and Courage;

Courage; and this I take to be the only true Ambition.

Camilla. Do you imagine then that Ambition and Disinterestedness are the same?

Almeria. No, Madam, true Ambition is incapable of Meanness, and as it is usually the Prospect of Gain that prompts us to the Commission of mean Actions, I have for that very Reason included Disinterestedness under the Name of Ambition.

Seraphina. How do you connect the Ideas of Courage and Ambition?

Almeria. Because, in some Cases it requires an uncommon Resolution to avoid being guilty of Meanness.

Seraphina. Be pleased to produce some Examples, in order to give us a general Notion of what you have asserted.

Almeria. I have known Ladies of no Fortune at all, who have had very considerable Offers to trespass against their Honour; Is there not then a great Resolution and Ambition necessary to resist such a Temptation, and continue in a State of Dependence?

Seraphina. I have known a Lady's Woman refuse a Sum sufficient to place her in a Condition above Servitude, only for the Trouble of delivering a Letter; and was offended also with the Offer.

Sacharissa. Very fine, indeed!

Almeria. And this is what you call Ambition?

Sacharissa. People of Condition are not liable to meet with any such Offers.

Almeria. They are only made to them in a delicate Manner, but they are not however less dangerous in their Consequence; Must not a young Lady possess a great Share of Self-denial, in chusing to appear in a plain Dress, in Preference to the

the gaudy Glitter of splendid Apparel; in approving Solitude, rather than enjoy Diversion, at the Hazard of her Reputation; and in discharging the Offices of filial Affection to an afflicted Parent in Distress, rather than spend her Time in the Pursuit of Pleasures and Amusements; in preferring a single Life, to the Alliance of a Man of low Birth, and destitute of Merit?

Sacharissa. You have considered true Ambition in its utmost Latitude, but I would be glad to know your Sentiments of the contrary.

Almeria. It consists, if I mistake not, in seeming ashamed when there is no Occasion, and in making a Merit of that which deserves to be exploded and detested.

Seraphina. As how, pray?

Almeria. In saying we are ashamed of our Dress, our Apartment, of not having a Servant to wait on us, when, according to our Birth, we ought to appear otherwise.

Sacharissa. And you see no Shame in all this?

Almeria. No, certainly, there can be none.

Constantia. Wherein then do you make it consist?

Almeria. In the Commission of some Crime.

Constantia. But, what Sort of Crime?

Almeria. Any Thing contrary to the Rules of Honesty, Honour, Valour, Fidelity, and Gratitude; in a Word, all that may be deem'd inconsistent with a laudable Ambition.

Sacharissa. But how do you reconcile this Ambition with Humility?

Almeria. The Virtues, Madam, never contradict, but support each other.

Sacharissa. Doth not Humility require us to entertain a mean Opinion of ourselves, and that we should rejoice, when others despise us?

Almeria. Yes, Madam; but it doth not require

quire us to deserve their Scorn by committing mean or base Actions.

Sacharissa. How can I have an ill Opinion of myself, if I practise the Virtues you have recited?

Almeria. We have always Faults enough to humble our Opinions; our Virtues are often defective; and as we do not owe them to ourselves, we ought not to boast of them.

Constantia. I must entreat the Favour of a Word more on false Ambition, which you have not so clearly represented as the true.

Almeria. False Ambition, then, is the Vanity we assume in being what we are not, or what we conceive ourselves to be, of our Birth, our Qualifications; it teaches us to despise others, and be wholly taken up with our own Persons, to speak in our own Praise; to dispute for the first Passage at departing out of a Chamber, to take the best Places, to covet a splendid Equipage, it makes us ashamed of our Distress, and by our Endeavours to conceal it, exposes us still to greater Inconveniences and ridiculous Absurdities.

Sacharissa. Would you have us then submit to one inferior to us, and suffer such a one to take Place of, or go before us?

Almeria. I should undergo this Submission without Reluctance.

Constantia. That is very difficult however to a Woman of Spirit.

Almeria. We have already seen that Courage (or Spirit as you call it) is above this Distinction, and is not the Point wherein it consists.

Sacharissa. But would you have us behave alike to all Ranks and Conditions of People?

Almeria. I would have you pay due Reverence to those, who, by their Birth, Fortune, Employment, or Age, claim a Superiority over us, and behave respectfully to our Equals, and with good Will and Complaisance to those beneath us.

Constantia.

Constantia. What! Must I be complaisant to the Village-Clowns, or my own Domesticks?

Almeria. Yes, doubtless; we may bid an honest Countryman Good-Morrow, ask him what News he hears, give him a patient Attention, and an obliging Answer to what Questions he may ask in his Turn; and much in the same Manner we should treat our Servants.

Sacharissa. When are we then to support our Dignity?

Almeria. I know not that we are entitled to any; our Youth places us below every Body.

Constantia. Have we the less Claim to it for being young?

Almeria. No; but we owe Respect to Persons advanced in Years; 'tis the Duty of Youth to submit, and obey; our chearful Condescension, our good Services, and obliging Complaisance, will procure us Esteem, and our Birth will never be once thought of, unless to reproach us with, when we appear to act unworthy of it.

D I A L O G U E VII.

On L Y I N G.

Laura. I AM overjoyed to find you, Ladies, as I have a Complaint to prefer against *Dorinda*, for throwing away her Conversation on one who cannot avoid Lying.

Melafina. You mean *Georgina*. 'Tis very true, she has long accustomed herself to it.

Laura. For my Part, I should esteem her beneath my Notice, if my Friends would expel her from their Company; as she has already been

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obliged

obliged to leave her Country, because none will vouchsafe her a Hearing.

Carolina. I should like well enough to divert myself with her.

Melafina. I could never divert myself with a Person that is not to be believed.

Carolina. Our Conversation should not always be of such a serious Nature, as to require so great Confidence.

Jocelina. True ; for I am apt to think there are some Lies innocent enough.

Laura. I can hardly believe it ; and it is so dangerous a Habit, and so difficult to confine within the Bounds of Innocence, if it be even possible, that I should judge it much more prudent and Christian-like, never to lye at all.

Calista. To me, who am in Love with Truth, and have the greatest Abhorrence of Lying, it would be much greater Satisfaction, if it was determined by all Parties never to tell a Lie on any Occasion.

Eudocia. But if it was so agreed on, how would you be able to live without some Lies, since there are a Thousand authorized by Custom.

Laura. But those who would maintain their Character, should leave off this Custom, and endeavour to get the better of it by never making Use of the least Disguise.

Chariclea. What then would become of Compliments ? For there are Abundance of little Falsties employed in Civility, and Complaisance can scarcely subsist without them.

Jocelina. Some are serviceable, and may prevent great Misfortunes.

Carolina. I beg Indulgence for those of a humorous Kind.

Calista. I absolutely prohibit all Sorts.

Eudocia.

Eudocia. What, would you not tell a Lie to save the Life of a Friend?

Calista. I should however count it a great Misfortune to be reduced to such a Necessity.

Carolina. I would tell a Lie by way of Excuse.

Laura. If I was tempted to tell a Lie, it should never be with a View of Interest, and I should even take a Pleasure in speaking Truth, tho' it might be instrumental to my Loss.

Eudocia. That's astonishing, really! And I must own, I should not easily be prevailed on to do so.

Melafina. By what has been said, it appears there are more Liars in the World, than we imagined.

Calista. We suffer ourselves to be led away by ill Example, and by beginning with inventing Fictions, we become by Degrees compleat Liars.

Eudocia. What, Madam, won't you permit us to tell a Lie by way of Embellishment to our Narrative?

Calista. A continued Series of Falsehoods I would never consent to, the most I can be brought to allow, is some few Exaggerations.

Focelina. As to Exaggerations, I defy you to hinder the Use of them, unless you alter our very Modes of Expression; instead of saying, *I have not seen you this Age*, we must say, *I have not seen you these two Days*; instead of *I am transported with the Happiness of seeing you*, we must say, *I am indifferently glad to see you*; instead of *I am grieved at your Misfortune*, we must sometimes say, *I am slightly affected with it*; and so of almost all Kinds of Compliments.

Melafina. You are pleased to rally us, Madam; But don't you think, if it is impossible to discourse without these Exaggerations, we should do well in approaching as near to Truth, as we can?

Jocelina. I agree to this, provided it doth not impose too great a Restraint upon our Conversation, and render it insipid, by depriving it in a great Measure of its Graces.

Carolina. I must beg the Favour of one Word more upon this Head; permit me therefore to propose a Query or two: Is it not lawful, Madam, to use serviceable Lies in the Behalf of our Friends, or to conceal their Defects?

Calista. I think we should speak well of our Friends, and even of those who are not so, whatever bad Qualities they may have.

Chariclea. If they are accused, Are we not to take their Part?

Calista. I would excuse them as far as I reasonably might venture to do; and as Charity would oblige me to entertain a favourable Opinion of their Actions, or Motives, I might be able to vindicate them without the Expence of a Lie.

Chariclea. But suppose the Nature of the Crime will admit of no Excuse?

Calista. I would then forbear to mention it.

Carolina. We must not, I find, expect any great Indulgence from *Calista*, and her Acquaintance should be particularly cautious of committing great Irregularities.

Melafina. Indeed, if we would practise her Maxims, we must be condemned to a perpetual Silence.

Jocelina. I don't know whether she would not accuse us of Lying, if we were to say nothing.

Calista. You have too much Sense, Madam, not to know I should have sufficient Grounds for such a Charge, and that it is a Lie of the most atrocious Kind, to be silent, when Truth is required to be revealed.

Carolina. You discourage me, Madam, and it will never be in my Power wholly to avoid Lying.

Chariclea.

Chariclea. We must however arrive at this Perfection, and no Pains ought to be spar'd to avoid a Crime, when we know it to be one.

Carolina. We must then desist from Compliments, which are but so many Lies.

Calista. They are so generally considered as such, and so universally used in the World, that they rarely impose upon, or deceive any Body ; so that, in this Particular, I would not hesitate much about it.

Jocelina. Since you have granted us this Boon, you will surely indulge us in the Embellishment of an entertaining Narrative.

Calista. As Tales are no more apt to gain Credit than Compliments, I leave you to your free Liberty in this Point also.

Chariclea. From what has been said, I think we may deduce this Inference ; that we should never disguise the Truth, that we should always have it in View, and confine ourselves to it with Pleasure, even in the most indifferent Matters, that we should never impose on the Credulity of any, and that we should never tell any Lie, but what passes current in the World for such, and that we take Delight only in speaking the Dictates of our Hearts.

Calista. Nothing is so beautiful as Truth ; it will not only be productive of our future Happiness, but render us on Earth fit Members of Society.

D I A L O G U E VIII.

On RESPECT.

Eusebia. I Wonder, so much as we have heard talk of Respect, that we have not yet had a particular

particular Discourse on that Head, in order to make us thoroughly understand what it means.

Semanthe. Is it not wholly included in the Word Benevolence?

Sabina. Every Body, Madam, has not so quick a Comprehension as yourself, to distinguish it in that Light; nor so much Inclination to practise it, if they had.

Eusebia. 'Tis true, indeed, young People have great Need of Information, and should be particularly instructed; and those who have had greater Experience, are mistaken, if they judge of the Understandings of others by their own.

Semanthe. 'Tis a very bigotted Way of Thinking, to imagine we can always conduct ourselves by the Rules of Benevolence: I would fain be taught as one that would live in the World.

Eusebia. Well, Madam, we will confine ourselves to good Breeding; which however extends no farther, than to deal with others only as we would have them deal with us.

Sabina. Let us endeavour to apply this Maxim particularly to ourselves.

Eusebia. It goes a great Way, and extends to all, it renders our Persons agreeable, and our Lives easy.

Semanthe. Can you think Life easy, when you are obliged to lay a continual Restraint upon your Tongue, for fear of giving Offence?

Eusebia. We should find it much more tiresome, if we were to speak all we think, and even always to prefer our own Inclinations, to the good Advice of our Friends.

Semanthe. Why, will you suppose that our Wills run counter to our Friends?

Eusebia. They do not always; but we should examine whether they do or no.

Sabina

Sabina. You reduce then all our Respect to Complaisance and Submission?

Eusebia. They are in a great Measure requisite, but Respect has a very extensive Import. It were endless to specify in what Particulars we should practise it, as it is very certain we should never be without it.

Semanthe. Yes, where our Acquaintance are fantastical; But won't you allow that we have not so great Occasion for it with reasonable People?

Eusebia. 'Tis very true? those who know themselves, will not exact so much of it; however, we can't wholly dispense with it; for all Tempers are not alike, and we must strive to suit our own, to those we meet with; and instead of consulting our own Humours, we must conform to those of others.

Semanthe. Reasonable People have no Humours.

Sabina. Few are without Humours; for I believe that is impossible either more or less.

Eusebia. We may have Humours, without being ill-natur'd, we have our Vexations, as well as our Joys; and Respect will suit itself to every Disposition.

Semanthe. We spent the Day yesterday at *Hippolita's*; let us repeat what passed there, and see if none of the Company failed in Point of Respect.

Eusebia. Yes, indeed, some were greatly wanting, and I must confess they put me in Pain for them.

Sabina. The Lady that told the Story seemed to be much offended, that none gave Attention to her.

Semanthe. Her Narrative was so tedious and trifling, that it was not worth listening to.

Eusebia. We need no great Complaisance to attend to what pleases us; but we should nevertheless afford a patient Hearing, tho' the Discourse be tiresome.

Semanthe. I said nothing, my Thoughts were otherwise employed.

Eusebia. She took Notice of it, and it was that which most displeased her.

Sabina. Would you have us give Attention to a Subject we disapprove ?

Eusebia. 'Tis this Attention that I call Respect, Good-breeding, Complaisance ; and, if I may venture to give it that Name before *Semanthe*, Charity.

Semanthe. Would you have prevented our interrupting that wretched Lutanist, who almost plagued us to Death with her unskilful Discord ?

Eusebia. In this all the Company wanted Respect. The Mistress of the House should have politely dismissed the Musician, and you should have concealed your Disgust.

Sabina. We had much better stay at Home in Quiet, than go abroad to meet with so many Inconveniences.

Eusebia. Our very Quiet is sometimes troublesome ; we were formed for Society, and cannot support Solitude a long while together.

Semanthe. Did not you observe two Ladies that were continually whispering ?

Sabina. Yes, and these are in my Opinion Strangers to good Manners ; but what I don't rightly understand, is that t'other Day, I heard one censure those who amuse themselves with talking at the Play-house, which is a public Place, where we pay our Money, and are obliged to nobody.

Eusebia. We should however give Attention to the Play, and not disturb the Actors.

Semanthe. They are paid for their Trouble, What would they require more ?

Eusebia. Attention and Applause. If you were reading a Poem, would you be pleased, if your Acquaintance refused to hear you ? This Indulgence then

then you should vouchsafe to others, if you expect it yourself.

Semanthe. Be kind enough to make us easy once in our Lives, and let us enjoy at least one Day without Constraint.

Eusebia. Live by yourself then, I know no other Remedy. But, Madam, all have not such a Spirit of Contradiction, as to take a Distaste against the Pleasures of others: Some love Verses, others Musick, others walking abroad; but indeed, few Things go exactly as we would have them, and it is for this Reason we should behave with Complaisance, lest we give Offence.

Sabina. Suppose you were invited to Dinner tomorrow, a slight Inconvenience may perhaps attend your going, Respect however, to the Lady that asks you, will induce you to accept the Invitation, to prevent her being affronted.

Eusebia. Examples of this kind are infinite, we should entertain Respect even for our Servants.

Semanthe. With Regard to these, I am sure Respect is due from them to us, not from us to them.

Eusebia. Your Service would be insupportable, if you have no Respect: For we should indulge them as much as we can, notwithstanding they are in our Power.

Semanthe. I can never be persuaded that I am obliged to consult the Ease of my Footman.

Eusebia. What, you would send him from one End of the Town to the other, without letting him know what he is to do at one Place, before he goes to another?

Sabina. A Person of any Thought, will shew Regard to their very Horses.

Eusebia. For certain, it is great Pity our Interest should be so universally preferred to Charity;

Semanthe, excuse the Expression.

Semantbe. I find then we must take our Leaves without the Secret of living uncontroll'd.

Eusebia. Your Search to this Effect will be to no Purpose : We have all of us our Humours and Imperfections ; we must, if we will live peaceably, indulge each other in our Turn ; and the most amiable Companions are those who behave with most Respect to others, and require the least Share of it themselves.

D I A L O G U E IX.

On the four CARDINAL VIRTUES.

Urania. **I**N order to endue us with a Capacity for entering into a rational Conversation, I think it would not be improper to make the Cardinal Virtues the Subject of this Day's Conversation, and under each of these Characters, to speak as Fancy shall suggest.

Hilaria. Agreed, let me for once assume the Part of Justice.

Urania. And I'll take that of Fortitude.

Isabella. And I Prudence.

Francisca. You have not left me any Choice, but I am contented with my Lot, and very well satisfied to represent Temperance.

Justice. I don't believe any of you can pretend to rival me : Nothing is so amiable as Justice ; she has always Truth on her Side, she judges without Prejudice, she sees every one in their real Light, she can condemn her Friends, and give her Enemies their Due ; she passes Sentence against herself, and approves only what is truly estimable.

Fortitude. All this is very true, but you stand in
Need

Need of my Assistance, and unless I was to support you, you would soon grow weary.

Justice. Why should I grow weary?

Fortitude. Because your Aspect is severe, you often give Offence, are esteemed by very few, you are an Object of Terror, and it requires an uncommon Share of Merit to conform to your Sentiments.

Prudence. It is my Province to guide her Steps to prevent her Precipitation, to teach her to weigh well the Cause in Hand; and you would both of you ruin all without my Inspection.

Justice. Is it not requisite to be always just?

Prudence. Yes, but not to be always seated on the Tribunal of strict Justice; we should consider Things according to their Circumstances.

Fortitude. You may indeed do some Service to Justice, but I am necessary to you; you may be more properly said to retain Justice, than to put her in Action, unless you both enjoy the Benefit of my Assistance.

Justice. I don't understand you: What, can't I without your Help see that my Friend is to blame, and that my Enemy is in the right?

Fortitude. No, you see it is of your own Accord; but without me you dare not say so, for Affection would make you fearful of offending your Friend.

Justice. 'Tis sufficient that I find the Cause just, to be able to maintain it.

Fortitude. Yes, if you take me along with you in the Decision; but you shut your Eyes that you may not see me: You impute to Justice, what belongs to Fortitude, and herein you act unjust.

Temperance. I am surprized, Ladies, to see that you all think me of no Consequence, and that I am quite unserviceable to you, because I have hitherto held my Tongue.

Prudence. Do you pretend to assume any Prerogative?

Temperance.

Temperance. I pretend so great a one, that I desire you all three to leave me out of your Councils.

Fortitude. And pray, what Good can you do with your pacific Disposition?

Temperance. I prevent your putting all the World in Confusion.

Justice. Wherein are you useful to me?

Temperance. I moderate your Justice, oftentimes harsh and disagreeable.

Prudence. I can't imagine you have any Pretensions to serve me.

Temperance. I resolve all your Doubts, and put a Stop to your Rashness, which would frequently carry you beyond Bounds.

Fortitude. By what you say, you carry the Sway from us all.

Temperance. Without Doubt you would all proceed to great Extremes, if I did not interfere; 'tis I that fix the Limits of all Things, and determine the Medium so requisite, and so difficult to find, and prevent Persons from running to Excess.

Prudence. I have always looked upon you as averse to Gluttony, and nothing farther.

Temperance. It is for Want of a better Acquaintance with me: I do indeed abolish all Gluttony and Luxury, and I indulge no Passion; I not only resist every Evil, but am likewise the Standard of Good: Without me, Justice would be insupportable to the Frailty of Mankind, Fortitude would drive them to Despair, Prudence would often prevent our determining on the right Side, and make us employ our whole Time in deliberating, without coming to an Issue; but by my Aid, Justice is enabled to act with Discretion, Fortitude is tempered with Moderation, Prudence admonishes, without weakening her Influence, and keeps a regular Pace, neither too fast, nor too slow; in a Word, I am the Bar to all manner of Excess.

Justice.

Justice. I am astonished at what you have said, But will you not allow that Wisdom goes beyond you?

Temperance. You can best answer that Question yourself; for you are not ignorant that Wisdom cannot exist without Sobriety. You need make no farther Enquiries, Ladies, for without me no Good can be accomplished.

Prudence. Can we not at least enjoy our Health without you.

Temperance. With great Difficulty: 'Tis in my Power to moderate Zeal when too violent, severe, and indiscreet; I am appointed to mark out such a Conduct, as may prevent Persons running to Extremes, to regulate the Bounds of Frugality, and Liberality, to fix the Times of Prayer and of Pennance, of Meditation, and of giving Alms; I abridge Exhortations, Sermons, and Self-Examination; in fact, I govern all the unbridled Desires of the World.

Justice. You have a deal of Business on your Hands.

Temperance. My Character, however, enables me to undergo it without Fatigue, and to discharge my Trust with Content and Resignation.

Fortitude. This imports, that we have all Occasion for you, Pray do you never want the Assistance of any one?

Temperance. No, I subsist entirely by myself.

Fortitude. Is it impossible to be too temperate?

Temperance. That would be to have no Temperance at all; for she can neither be possessed of one Extreme nor the other; neither too much, nor too little.

Prudence. You put me out of Conceit with my own Condition, and make me envious of yours.

Temperance. That is because you entertain too high an Opinion of yourself; however, you are all inestimably

inestimably valuable; Can any Thing be more amiable than Justice, always founded on Truth, incapable of Prejudice, incorruptible, disinterested, and judging even its own Actions by the Rules of Impartiality?

Justice. Yet with all these good Qualities, you say that I am hated.

Temperance. The Reason of this is, because you don't flatter, and the World is fond of Flattery.

Fortitude. And I, you say, should ruin all without your Interposition.

Temperance. Yes, but in Conjunction with me, you may do Miracles: You animate all the Virtues; you pursue all your Undertakings to the final Issue, and are never weary.

Prudence. And I only deliberate.

Temperance. You know how to chuse the proper Time and Season for every Thing, are very useful, you foresee Inconveniencies; you take suitable Measures according to the Result of your Determination, and are absolutely necessary, provided you take me for your Guide, to defend you from the Perils of Excess, and the Hazards of Extremity.

Fortitude. You are willing I see, to administer Consolation to us, but indeed we must own our Characters are far inferior to yours.

Temperance. What should I be without you? Employed alone, and oftentimes in vain, to prevent the Excesses and regulate the Passions of Mankind: It is my Ambition to be of Use in moderating the Virtues.

Fortitude. Are we stil'd Virtues, while we need your Aid, to guard us from Extremity? Virtue always knows the true Medium.

Temperance. 'Tis I that point out this Medium; I don't say that you would be guilty of any great Enormities,

Enormities, but that you often might be apt to go too far.

Justice. Can I be too just?

Temperance. No, but you might too often give Judgment, and by that Means become tiresome to every Body; and Fortitude joined to the Severity of Justice would render it still a greater Burthen.

Prudence. I could remedy this Inconvenience.

Temperance. You would often perplex them: Our mutual Aid is necessary to each other. Let us then agree to live well together, and void of Envy, let us enter into a League against the Corruption of the World, stronger and more powerful than all the Virtues put together, without the Assistance of divine Grace.

D I A L O G U E X.

On D R E S S.

Narcissa. **W**HAT Pains are taken to make us hate, or at least neglect the Advantages of Dress! Is there any Thing more natural than to be fond of them?

Amanda. And after all, can any Thing be more innocent?

Lætitia. They are for placing old Heads upon young Shoulders.

Lauriana. That's because they know the ill Consequence of such a Propensity.

Amanda. Such a Propensity, Madam, leaves us as we advance in Years.

Lauriana. Who told you so?

Lætitia. We see it every Day, those who have passed the Prime of their Days leave off Dress.

Lauriana.

Lauriana. That's only because you have an Opportunity of seeing few but Women of Sense ; but you are mistaken, if you think a Taste for Dress is only the Effect of Youth ; it makes a more lasting Impression on the Mind than you imagine, it continues a great while, and is the most universal Foible of our Sex in general.

Cynthia. And the most excusable one.

Olympia. But what would they have of us ? Must we put on Sackcloth ? Why, pray, may we not dress as becomes our Age and Station ?

Harriot. 'Tis the greatest Pleasure I propose to myself in quitting this Place.

Lætitia. I must confess I don't see any ill Consequences liable to proceed from Dress.

Lauriana. They are infinite ; it may cost us our Reputation and Fortunes.

Lætitia. You must have a good deal of Eloquence, to persuade me so trifling an Affair can be attended with such serious Consequences.

Lauriana. I shall not employ any Arguments to persuade you, of which I am not entirely Mistress, but shall convince you by good and solid Reasons.

Amanda. 'Tis a Trifle not worthy Disputation ; we are young, are fond of ourselves, we would appear decent, we see others gay, and like to be so too : And where is the mighty Harm in all this ?

Cynthia. Is it a Crime to prefer a Rose-coloured Ribband to a black one ?

Harriot. *Lauriana* would have us wear nothing but the Habit of Saint Cyr.

Narcissa. And so be pointed at by all the World for the Singularity of our Garb !

Lauriana. The Habit of Saint Cyr will do us Honour where ever we go ; and will be a continual Proof of our Nobility, and that's a Point regarded by every one.

Lætitia.

Lætitia. But pray tell us now the terrible Evils to which this Taste for Dress may expose us.

Lauriana. Why do you dress yourself? And who do you study to please by so doing?

Cynthia. Myself.

Lauriana. That is indeed the most innocent Motive, here is no Fault but Self-Love; but this is not all: If you took Delight in dressing for the Honour of Saint Cyr, I would freely consent to it; but you carry this Taste with you every where; it may therefore be thought you design to please somebody else; this may be the Case; and hereby your Reputation is endangered.

Lætitia. We must needs then appear fluttish, if we would procure Esteem?

Lauriana. We should never be fluttish; but a young Lady that prefers Neatness to a gaudy Dress, tells the World, without speaking, that she is studious to please no particular Person, and resolved to be wise.

Amanda. And consequently, when I dress myself out, I proclaim my own Destruction!

Lauriana. That is indeed the Way to it.

Lætitia. But according to your Notion then, all Women will be ruined, for there are none but what indulge this Gratification.

Lauriana. It is not our Taste that will ruin us, but our extreme Devotion to it.

Cynthia. We must then restrain ourselves in this Particular.

Amanda. I know not any Place where we are allowed to pursue our Inclinations.

Lætitia. I have notwithstanding a great Fancy to indulge mine.

Olympia. I never mind what they are always putting in our Heads on this Subject.

Lauriana. The Delight you take in Dress, is nothing at present. 'Tis an Effect of that Vanity we
are

are all born with; you have now no ill Designs, no Artifice in your Gaiety; but unless you endeavour to get the better of it, if you won't consent to give it up, and believe the Experience of others, depend upon it, Ladies, it may lose you your Reputations, your Fortunes, and your Souls.

Amanda. Is it possible that a natural Propensity that you yourself have found an Excuse for, and represented as harmless at present, can occasion so many Misfortunes; and do you not exaggerate a little in what you have said?

Cynthia. The Lady would only frighten us out of our Gaiety.

Harriot. I can never believe we need be in fear of Damnation, for wearing a Ribband we have a Mind to.

Lauriana. Our Inclinations are our Ruin: When we don't oppose them, they hurry us into Dangers we have no Mistrust of; we dress now with no other View, than Self-Satisfaction: We find young Men praise us, we are pleased with their Commendations, we dress ourselves to pleasure the Man who praises us most; he perceives it, finds our Foible, takes Advantage of it; we engage our Heart, and our Reputation is lost.

Amanda. This is really a frightful Picture: Will you be so kind as to explain to us, how we are ruined with Respect to our worldly Concerns?

Lauriana. We begin with a Ribband we take a Liking to; from that, we want more; we then must have a Suit of Cloaths, and thence we covet more of various Kinds; they please us while they are new, but we take a Dislike to them when we see others have finer or richer than ourselves; these we must possess also, but know not how to purchase them; to this End we borrow Money, we heap Debts upon Debts, and are unable to pay them; so that what begun with a single Ribband,

band, will end at last in obliging us to sell our Estate, and we are at once involved in irrecoverable Ruin.

Lætitia. You will soon make us afraid of Dress.

Olympia. Go on, Madam, if you please, and let us see how we endanger our Souls.

Lauriana. You see it yourself: By your Injustice you borrow what you are not able to pay, and involve whole Families in Ruin: I have seen great Numbers reduced to ask Alms, and knew very well the Persons that brought them to it; and indeed the Case as I have represented it, is but too general.

Amanda. But Dress is the only Entertainment of our Youth, and doth not last long enough to occasion so many Disorders.

Lauriana. This Inclination doth not leave us as we grow in Years, unless our Reason get the better of it.

Cynthia. An old Woman dressed out would make a very ridiculous Appearance.

Lauriana. That is another Inconvenience attending Dress, but I was willing to demonstrate those of more Importance.

Harriot. I think it a Matter of Importance enough to avoid being an Object of Ridicule.

Lauriana. Do not then indulge Extravagance in Dress, for 'tis a Folly that admits of no Moderation, and will be as apt as any Thing to subject you to Raillery.

Lætitia. You will reduce us shortly to Sackcloth and Ashes.

Lauriana. May it please God to reduce you to Propriety, Simplicity, and Modesty, and let the World see you can dress better if you please.

Olympia. Is there as much Applause to be expected for those who do not dress, as there is Blame for those who dress extravagantly?

Lauriana.

Lauriana. As there is nothing more prevailing than this false Taste, there is nothing in greater Esteem among our Sex, than to be above indulging such a Weakness: A Conduct, which at the same Time shews, that we have no Desire to please any Person in particular, that we regard our Reputation, and are possessed of a truly elevated Spirit, and Nobleness of Soul.

Cynthia. You have greatly edified us, Madam, and I did not think you could so well have supported the Maxims you advanced.

Amanda. How happy are we to be so easily convinced!

Narcissa. And how rejoiced am I to put an End to this Conversation!

DIALOGUE XI.

ON INDISCRETION.

Violetta. I AM just come from a Place where I have suffered great Uneasiness: There chanced to be in Company a very worthy Man, who had the Misfortune to be crooked; a young Lady was imprudent enough, in his Presence, to descant on the Advantages of a graceful Mien: We made Signs, and did all we could to make her sensible of the Perplexity which she had drawn on this innocent Person, and to induce her to change the Topic of Discourse; but she, notwithstanding, was determined to continue it, and harangued at length, on the Imprudence of Cripples, who appear abroad in the World: I took my Leave as thoroughly mortified, as he could be, for whom I underwent the Anxiety.

Julia. What strange Indiscretion!

Melliora.

Melliora. Such a Person as this cannot be enough avoided.

Sophia. Every one hath not such visible Defects.

Lucinda. When we are indiscreet, Madam, we always give Uneasiness, and are seldom contented with reflecting on Deformity.

Sophia. We know very well there are Defects as visible as this: But are we not safe when our Persons are no ways remarkable?

Lucinda. And who is there, but has some Misfortune or other, that requires to be handled tenderly, and with Discretion? And if these are not so visible, we are not however the less sensible of them.

Arabella. We do not always do Justice to ourselves, Madam: The Imperfections of the Mind are not so perceivable, as those of the Body; we do not discern them so clearly, we do not so willingly acknowledge them, and do not give ourselves so much Concern about them.

Lucinda. Alas! Madam, If you know the Person the Lady speaks of, as well as I do, you would find that she never opens her Lips, but she affronts and alarms somebody or other.

Melliora. She should be expelled from all human Society.

Lucinda. That would be a very good Thing; in order to live in Tranquility, we must get rid of her Company, but Indiscretion is more universal than you imagine.

Julia. But I am of *Sophia's* Opinion, and think those that have a tolerable Person, have nothing to fear from Censure.

Lucinda. Do you imagine then, Madam, that Indiscretion proceeds no farther than mentioning a Defect before the Person that labours under it, and do you make nothing of the Importunity of Indiscretion?

Melliora.

Melliora. Explain to us the Nature of Indiscretion.

Lucinda. I am unable to perform the Task you have enjoined me, for Definitions, you know as well as myself, should be concise, and I think I could employ a whole Hour in describing this Weakness.

Violetta. I can't but regret, Madam, that it is not as much in my Power to describe it as it is in your's: For after what I have seen to Day, I could rail against it with Pleasure.

Melliora. The Lady must needs oblige us with the Description, in order that we may avoid it.

Lucinda. Indiscretion is the Bane of Society: Is always offensive, and universally prevailing; we are guilty of it every Hour, at all Times, and in all Sorts of Company; it displeases without any Intention of so doing, it enters into our Thoughts unseasonably, and is uttered unawares, 'tis ever talking of itself, it loses its Aim, it listens to what it would rather not hear, and doth not hear what it is desirous of knowing, it rails at Deformity, before the Deformed, attacks Poverty, before those under the Frowns of Fortune, declaims against Meanness of Birth, in the Presence of those who want the Advantage of an illustrious Pedigree, it turns old Age into Ridicule, to the Mortification of those advanced in Years; in a Word, it speaks on all Occasions, when it should be silent.

Arabella. Indeed, Madam, there is nothing so ridiculous, as the Picture you have just set to View, and I know of nothing so odious as Indiscretion.

Julia. I am of Opinion there is no Fault so inexcusable, and Discretion must needs be the greatest of Virtues.

Lucinda. I believe there may be more essential ones, tho' I know of none in such frequent Use.

Melliora.

Melliora. You are in the right, for we stand in need of it every Moment.

Arabella. We can never dispense with it, except with our most intimate Acquaintance, from whom we fear no Censure, and to whom we speak our real Sentiments.

Lucinda. Discretion, Madam, is even necessary to be used towards those you speak of, for we should treat our Friends with Respect, behave circumspectly before them, find fit Opportunities for Freedom of Conversation, be tender of their Reputations, be often blind to their Foibles; and these nice Regulations are entirely under the Guidance of Discretion.

Violetta. I esteem it Violation of the Laws of Friendship, to use Artifice towards the Persons I love, and disguise from them the Thoughts of my Heart.

Lucinda. You will injure Friendship in a much greater Manner, if you don't use Artifice with Discretion, for our Nature is too imperfect and defective of itself, not to need sometimes the Assistance of Art.

Arabella. I acquiesce in your Opinion, and must acknowledge I did not consider Discretion till now, in the Light you have placed her; and I am quite pleased with your Manner of discussing this Topic.

Lucinda. Discretion is indeed admirable; it teaches us the Government of our Tongue, prevents our speaking too abruptly, it fixes our Attention upon others, forbids our discoursing of our own Persons, our Birth, our good or ill Fortune, or any Business relative to ourselves; guided by her we never give Uneasiness, but frequently Pleasure; but I fear, Ladies, I shew my Want of it at this Instant, by engrossing so long your Attention.

Melliora.

Melliora. No, Madam, that you can never want; our only Desire is to be instructed, and all that you have said, has a most fit Tendency to this useful Purpose; let me beg the Favour of you to proceed.

Lucinda. I don't pretend to greater Abilities than yourselves, Ladies, and perhaps 'tis owing to Interest and Self-Love, that I attack a Folly, of which none has so large a Share as myself; but since you are willing we should edify each other, let us endeavour to acquire a due Portion of Discretion; we shall find its Value in every Thing, even in our very Virtues; 'tis the Part of Discretion to regulate even them, for we should not always be serious, we should not always be exercised in the Practice of Devotion, nor in always talking about it; and indeed, Discretion only should be the continual Object of our Employment.

Violetta. I no longer regret my Sufferings upon Account of the indiscreet Lady, since the Adventure gave Rise to a Consideration, from whence we have all the greatest Reason to expect Improvement and Satisfaction.

N. B. In the Original, here follows a Dialogue on Order; but as it chiefly treats of passing the Carnival in France, and consequently of very little Use to English Readers, I have taken the Liberty to omit it.

DIALOGUE XII.

On COURAGE.

Clarissa. I AM quite tired of being teized continually about Courage, and would fain be properly informed wherein it consists.

Sophronia.

Sophronia. Courage is the Act (if I may so call it) of avoiding the Impulse of Fear, and this Kind of Merit is not a proper Attribute of our Sex, who should have due Allowance made to their Timidity, in being afraid of Spirits, Thunder, and all manner of alarming Incidents.

Lucilla. Whether 'tis excuseable or no, it is not in my Power to avoid it.

Clarinda. 'Tis certain that Courage is opposed to Fear; but there is more than one Sort of it, and it is not that which inspires a Love of War, and makes Heroes endanger their Lives, that is expedient for us; as to those little Weaknesses recited by *Sophronia*, I wish with all my Heart I could divest myself of them.

Lucilla. And how would you get rid of them?

Clarinda. By resolving betimes to oppose their Influence, for these Foibles which we acquire in our Youth, and which we then think become us, grow into Diseases, which, as we grow up, give us great Pain, and are not easily remedied: I have seen Persons who have occasioned great Perplexities, by giving Way to such a dangerous Pusillanimity.

Clarissa. Nothing appears to me more excuseable.

Corinna. We have Foibles enough, that require a favourable Indulgence, without having voluntary Ills to guard against.

Clarissa. Let us at present confine ourselves to Courage.

Clarinda. I am pretty sure *Corinna* needs less Instruction in this Particular, than any of us.

Corinna. If it be really so, 'tis owing to the frequent Attention to the Lady that makes this Assertion, and to the Benefit I have reap'd from her Instructions.

Lucilla.

Lucilla. Be that as it will, Madam, please to favour us with a Repetition of what you have learn'd concerning Courage.

Corinna. I have been told that Courage consists in surmounting the Difficulties which occur either in ourselves or others, and in the Accomplishment of our Undertakings without being disheartened.

Lucilla. And what mighty Undertakings can we engage in here, where we have nothing to do but to obey and be subservient to our Orders?

Clarinda. Courage is even necessary to both these Purposes.

Clarissa. We are all of us possessed of it then, since we see none among us that neglect the Duties of the Place.

Corinna. There is a deal of difference then, Madam, between merely doing any Thing, and doing it as we ought: There are few Soldiers that neglect going to the Field; but some go thither with an Ardour of Impatience, and others like a Bear to the Stake.

Lucilla. This Comparison gives me perfect Satisfaction, and makes me sensible that there is the same Distinction observable among us.

Corinna. We have some who discharge their Duties chearfully, and are the first in every Exercise, who rise at the Instant the Bell rings in the Morning, and never complain of Cold or Heat, who find Time to be serviceable to others as well as themselves, are willing to work, and to give Satisfaction to their Mistresses, who perform even greater Tasks than they are enjoyn'd, and set no Value on their own Actions, knowing that they must have encountered greater Hardships, had they lived Abroad in the World; and in my Opinion, such as these are endued with Courage.

Clarinda. Be so kind as to describe as well those who are deficient in these Accomplishments.

Corinna.

Corinna. To these all the necessary Duties are a Pain, they can neither weaken nor go to sleep, they think the Rules enjoin'd them insupportable, delight to live like Brutes, rising when they can sleep no longer, and wanting to go to Bed whenever Sloth gets the upper Hand of them, eating as often as their greedy Appetite requires, never employing themselves, continually seeking new Pleasures, or at least solicitous of Rest and Inactivity.

Sophronia. You seem to confine your Examples to the present Time, supposing we were never to depart from the Convent.

Corinna. We may not meet with exactly the same Inconveniencies perhaps; but we shall in all Likelihood experience much greater; what I have represented are Trifles, in Comparison of what we may feel from the Strokes of Adversity, or the Peevishness of ill-Nature in those with whom we may have Intercourse hereafter, who will not be at the Pains of admonishing us by such gentle Measures as are used here.

Clarissa. You insist then upon a Fortitude of Mind, as well as Perseverance in our Actions.

Lucilla. I should have sufficient Ability to undergo any bodily Sufferings; but as to Contradictions, Reprimands, or Contempt, I could not endure with Patience, and should scarce forbear resenting them.

Clarissa. And I could more easily submit to have my Inclinations thwarted; being, I must confess, extremely sensible of outward Injuries.

Corinna. You see, Madam, that Courage is of a very extensive Nature, is always requisite, and in every Particular. What can we expect in the future Part of our Lives, if we can't endure any Kind of Sufferings? How shall we be found resolute in Body and Mind, if we shrink and are dismayed at the least Pain or Appearance of Danger?

Never can we hope for a stronger Constitution of Body, but by accustoming ourselves to Fatigue and Labour, and never will our Minds become firm and undaunted, unless we are inur'd in the Practice of surmounting every Obstacle we meet with.

Clarinda. 'Tis the same with Virtue; which is only obtained by the Proofs we give that we are able to do Violence to our Inclinations.

Sophronia. How do we know what Blessings God has in Store for us? We may, perhaps, have nothing to suffer.

Corinna. God has otherwise decreed; we are to obtain Salvation by walking in the narrow Path, and Happiness will never be our Portion, unless our Patience under Affliction make good our Claim to it.

Sophronia. All this will cost no Pains, provided I persevere in Acts of Devotion.

Corinna. You will find it will cost you more than you at present imagine, unless you are not hitherto accustomed to suffer much.

Clarissa. But is every one to suffer alike? And is there no Condition of Life that can make our Sufferings seem lighter to us?

Corinna. If any Thing can alleviate them, 'tis to expect their Arrival, to prepare for them, to accustom ourselves to them, to think those we meet trifling, and to bear with equal Mind even the greatest: I am of Opinion, that a young Lady of Saint Cyr, who has patiently submitted to the Inconveniencies, the Austerities, Constraints, Subjections, and Oppositions, that are inseparable from a virtuous Education, will be much better fortified against the Misfortunes she will find, when she comes abroad into the World, than one that has been indolent, nice, difficult, and so far from fortifying her Mind by Resignation under Afflictions, will, on the contrary, weaken it with Complaints, Murmurings,

Murmurings, revealing her Hardships, which only serve to aggravate our own particular Foibles, by the Addition of those who sympathize in our Distresses.

Clarissa. I begin to think the Ladies of Saint Cyr have need of Courage to support them under the Rigour of their Misfortunes, and the Restraints of this House excite in me an Envy of the Great and Rich, who possess almost all they can desire.

Corinna. I was only willing to apply what has been said of Courage to ourselves, in order to render these Instructions useful to us; but there is no Condition exempt from Trouble, and in which Courage is not absolutely requisite: Great People have great Sufferings; we complain of Restraint; whereas, the Great are infinitely more Slaves to it than we are: They have great Difficulties to combat, while we have but smaller ones to struggle with.

Clarissa. At least, they enjoy bodily Ease.

Corinna. The Pains their Minds endure, however, would afford us but a melancholy Picture, if we were to examine into them; and as to their Bodies, tho' they enjoy the Means of Ease, they are exposed to Fatigues in accomodating themselves to the Troubles of the Mind, and they are thoroughly sensible, notwithstanding the Advantages of Birth and Fortune, that Courage is even necessary, in order to support the Toils attendant on Rank and Distinction.

Sophronia. To what Troubles then are they liable on this Account.

Corinna. Don't you know, Madam, that our Princes often go on Foot, as well in their Journies, as their ordinary Excursions? I don't mean for Pleasure always, but even tire themselves with the Fatigue.

Clarinda. Some Time ago the King of *Spain* met the Duke of *Anjou*, on the Road from *Versailles* to Saint *Cyr*: He had taken off his Coat, for the Sake of greater Freedom in Walking, he was amusing himself with Shooting in a very hard Frost; notwithstanding which, he was on Foot, and carried a Fowling-Piece upon his Shoulder.

Sophronia. To what End was he thus poorly accommodated?

Corinna. To fortify his Body, and invigorate his Constitution, to use himself to Fatigues, which are inseparable from a Warrior; and to render his Mind courageous, and set it more at Liberty, than it could possibly be, while it remained a Slave to Delicacy and Pleasure.

Clarinda. I am well satisfied with Respect to Courage, let us now treat of that Fidelity still farther required of us.

Lucilla. That Subject must be reserved to a particular Conversation.

D I A L O G U E XIII.

ON INTEGRITY.

Eloisa. **T**HE Conferences we have had upon Subjects, of which I had form'd but imperfect Ideas, have given me so great Satisfaction, that I would willingly enter into a Conversation on the Topic of Integrity.

Charlotte. I take this to consist in the Accomplishment of whatever Task is enjoined us.

Alinda. To give me a clearer Comprehension of it, 'tis necessary to produce Examples.

Charlotte. For Instance, Madam, suppose we are prohibited the Use of profane Songs, and that every

every Precaution is taken, to keep them out of our Sight, either in Print, or Manuscript : Do you think it would be a Manifestation of our Integrity, in yielding a literal Obedience to the Prohibition, and instead of repeating such Songs, to sing those which we had before learned in the World ? And is not this an equal Impediment to the Design intended ?

Eloisa. And what is that Design ?

Charlotte. That we should remain ignorant of every thing that has an ill Tendency, and employ our Heart and Mind in the Pursuit of laudable Objects.

Chariclea. I can't prevent the Knowledge of what I had before learned in the World.

Charlotte. 'Tis to be hoped you might forget it, and you ought to endeavour it.

Chariclea. Have we Power over our Memory ?

Charlotte. We may avoid practising what we recollect is evil, and we shall soon be enabled to forget it, if we sincerely desire so to do.

Alinda. But will all our Care prevent our encountering the same Evils in the World when we leave this Place ?

Charlotte. We may alledge this very Reason for refusing to receive Instruction in the Duties of Religion, for we shall perhaps, hereafter, meet with several of impious and profligate Dispositions ; we may therefore neglect to form our Minds to Virtue, since we shall find too many without it.

Eloisa. The Danger of finding Corruption and Wickedness in the World, should be a sufficient Inducement to furnish ourselves here with Preservatives of every kind.

Alinda. Let us return once more to produce Examples of Integrity.

Charlotte. We submit ourselves to the Guidance of a spiritual Director, in order that he may conduct us in the Way of Salvation ; and to this End

he should be informed of what Good or Ill is rooted in our Nature; Would it then be an Argument of our Integrity to conceal any thing from him?

Chariclea. We are not always obliged to confess to the same Person.

Charlotte. 'Tis true, the Church allows us an entire Liberty with regard to Confession; but it is not always proper to practise what we have Leave to do.

Chariclea. What! If in the Absence of my Director I should confess to another, would you have me begin my Confession again?

Charlotte. You are not obliged to do this; but if you are betrayed into any considerable Error, Integrity will require that you should tell your Confessor.

Chariclea. I should be rather glad that the Fault had escaped his Knowledge.

Charlotte. This would be to pervert the Design of having a Confessor; since if he is not made acquainted with your Actions, he will not be able to direct your Conduct with Certainty..

Eloisa. You would not trifle in this Manner with your Physician; and if you was to have a Fever in the Interval between his Visits, you would not fail to acquaint him with every Symptom of Danger attending it, in order that he might prescribe proper Remedies to remove the Disease.

Maria. Nothing can be more just than this Comparison; and I don't see now how any one can think otherwise.

Alinda. I am so fond of Examples, that I should be glad of some more.

Charlotte. The Establishment of St. Cyr was in order to form the Minds of young Ladies to Christianity, that they might propagate Religion in all Places whithersoever Providence should conduct them.

them. Would they behave with Integrity in this Profession, if they content themselves with the mere Observation of the Rules of *St. Cyr*, without an entire Resignation to Religion and all Kinds of Virtue?

Maria. By all the Examples you have selected, Integrity and Sincerity seem very much alike.

Charlotte. As all the Virtues have the same End, that is to say, the real Interest of Mankind; they bear a great Resemblance to each other; and it is indeed hard to distinguish between Integrity, Sincerity and Simplicity.

Maria. I am not a little pleased to hear you mention Simplicity; for (if I may venture to own it) I have been always used to mistake it for Stupidity.

Charlotte. Nothing can be more opposite; and I have heard it asserted by experienced People, that the greatest Wits, and most exalted Minds, have the greatest Share of Simplicity.

Chariclea. In what then do you make this Simplicity to consist?

Charlotte. In not being double-minded, artful, addicted to Cunning, Design, Evasions, and Equivocations, not censuring what others say and do; in speaking plainly what we think, and believing others do the same; in not objecting to what is said; in not misconstruing Things into any other Meaning than what they may naturally be supposed to bear; in forbearing impertinent Curiosity, and in taking Care not to employ our Thoughts on useless and often wicked Intentions.

Chariclea. I tell you again, one can't always be Mistress of one's Thoughts.

Charlotte. And I repeat to you once more, that with the Assistance of God, which never fails to attend virtuous Purposes, we have the Power over every Thing; we may retain our Thoughts, or

alter their Intention, and exemplify in a greater Measure our Simplicity, by being always exercis'd in such Employments, as necessarily incline our Hearts to Virtue.

Chariclea. You allow not the least Indulgence then to Pleasure, if you restrain our very Thoughts.

Charlotte. All that we have treated of is in no wise inconsistent with innocent Amusements; and if you once knew the Blessings of a true Integrity of Soul, Sincerity and Simplicity, you would be ready enough to acknowledge, that they afford more Satisfaction than any other kind of Pleasure in the World.

DIALOGUE XIV.

ON RAILLERY.

Sapphira. **I** WAS greatly concerned, Ladies, lest my late Excursion into the Country might have deprived me of the Honour of your Conversation, and I would willingly embrace the Opportunity To-day of asking you one Question, which you, I know, are better able to resolve than any Body.

Eloisa. I have very little Skill in Decisions of any Sort; but you need but command, and I will with Pleasure give my Opinion to the best of my Ability.

Sapphira. I chanced to be lately in Company with several Persons of Understanding; the Theme of our Discourse was Raillery; some of them alledged that it was a Token of refined Wit, and that when it was well judged, and offended no body, it rendered Conversation agreeable: Others said we should never rally at all: At last the Dispute was referred

referred to me, and I frankly confessed, that I was utterly incapable of deciding it.

Semanthe. I should be very ready to acquiesce with those who espouse the Cause of Raillery, since to suppress it, would be depriving Conversation of one of its chief Graces; Society without it would become dull and languid.

Elvira. But, pray Madam, could you take Delight in hearing the Actions of any Person censured; and can such a Person, have any Pleasure in becoming the Subject of ridicule to a whole Company?

Semanthe. Alas! Madam, this is not what I call Raillery; that which I esteem displeases nobody; it ought even to be agreeable to the Person at whom it is levelled; we should employ our Raillery only on those who understand it, who are fond of it, and are able to return it.

Elvira. But here are some, who will be glad to enter into Discourse with us.

Violetta. Don't we interrupt you, Ladies? I have the greatest Reason to fear it, and I am persuaded we are not very acceptable, as you have much more agreeable Company.

Sapphira. We welcome you with Pleasure, and we cannot better testify our Satisfaction, than by resuming the Conversation in which we were engaged when you came in: We were upon Raillery; some approved, and others condemned it, and in short, all of us were desirous of a more thorough Acquaintance with it.

Julia. For my own Part, I find so much Difficulty in observing all the Measures necessary to be regarded by those who practise Raillery, that I think it the best and safest Way never to rally at all.

Semanthe. 'Tis then thro' Indolence, Madam, that you dislike Raillery; for if you would take the Pains, you would be better able to display it than any one.

Julia

Julia. You have too good an Opinion of me : But I do not indeed think Raillery a Matter of sufficient Consequence to give me the Trouble of observing the exact Bounds wherein it is necessary to confine it.

Melliora. There are few Graces but require some Pains to possess them.

Violetta. How ! Madam, are not the Graces natural ?

Elvira. I fancy personal Graces may be natural ; but mental Accomplishments are mostly acquired.

Semantbe. I am so much of *Melliora's* Opinion, that I can't help thinking, that even those of the Person are to be acquir'd.

Sapphira. There is so much to be said on this Subject, that if we treat it as it will admit, we shall quite leave that of Raillery ; it deserves indeed a particular Conversation.

Semantbe. You have greatly obliged me, Madam, by reminding us of our Argument ; for I would fain have Raillery obtain a Sanction in such a Company as ours.

Violetta. But, don't you know, Madam, how many ill Consequences have resulted from Raillery ?

Semantbe. I know indeed many Instances to this Effect ; but the Number would be much diminished, if Raillery was never employed but on those who admire it, which is the first Condition on which I admitted it.

Melliora. Are you not acquainted with Madam, —, who rallies all Persons indiscriminately with infinite Humour, notwithstanding her own Figure is so ridiculous ? It certainly doth not become such a one to use it.

Semantbe. If she employs it first on her own Imperfections, she may be allowed the Liberty of exerting it on others : there are none, whose Raillery

is more severe, than those who exercise it on themselves.

Julia. No, because we can say nothing of them, but what they have first observed of themselves.

Elvira. You will always fall into that Sort of Raillery which is offensive, and that should never be indulged.

Semanthe. For my Part, I never gave Offence this Way to any one; nor have I laid myself under any Restraint in this Particular, because I was never inclined to rally any Persons but those I had a Regard for.

Violetta. I think this the safest Way, to rally our Friends, and suffer them to retort it on us.

Julia. All that I can understand by what hath been said, does but confirm me the more in my Opinion, that it is best never to rally at all.

Semanthe. I shall however still continue to rally my Friends.

Sapphira. We should in every Respect conform to the Rules of Christianity, which are best able to decide in those Cases; and as we ought to do unto others only as we would have them do by us, so likewise let us never say that to others, which we ourselves should be displeased to hear.

DIALOGUE XV.

On the GRACES.

Teresa. **W**E were so taken up the other Day with our Topic of Raillery, that we passed very slightly over what was said concerning the Acquisition of the Graces.

Cleomelia. I have often heard say; such a one is born to please, another Person is born to torment;
fo

so that I always thought the Graces were natural, and I can scarcely conceive how they can be acquired.

Melinda. I have heard so too : But I don't know whether all those Persons whose Actions are agreeable, and correspond with our Inclinations, and who never do any Thing but with a good Grace ; I know not, I say, whether such may not have learned in their Infancy these Accomplishments, which appear to us so natural and engaging.

Teresa. Indeed, if a Child was never taught to use its Fingers in eating, to hide its Mouth when it gapes, to turn out the Toes, and keep the Feet at a proper Distance, and so on, I question if these Things would have come into the Mind naturally.

Melinda. When we accustom ourselves betimes to any Actions, they do indeed appear natural, and are not easily forgotten.

Prudentia. This shews plainly the Advantages that must accrue to us from an early Practice of Goodness.

Melinda. But are all the Graces included in the Instances *Teresa* has selected ?

Teresa. They consist of all our Actions in general, so that it would be endless to recite the Particulars : But if I were to prescribe a general Rule for our Conduct, it would be to let all our Actions be guided with as much Circumspection, as if those Persons were Witnesses of them, whom of all the World we would study most to oblige.

Cleomelia. This would be a very great Restriction.

Melinda. It would not last long, and you would be certain you were doing your Duty without any extraordinary Trouble.

Cleomelia. What ! Should I always behave as if I was in the King's Presence ; and must I never enjoy my own Liberty !

Silvia.

Silvia. We so seldom see the King, that before him we are required to wear an Air of Respect and Attention; but if we had the Honour of conversing with him familiarly, we should laugh before him with a good Grace, eat likewise in the same manner; in a Word, by doing only what we ought, enjoy perfect Freedom in his Presence.

Prudentia. What do you mean by laughing with a good Grace?

Silvia. To laugh with a good Grace, is to laugh at proper Times, and with Moderation; not to pride ourselves in Laughter, and never to force it beyond its natural Continuation.

Corinna. I knew a Lady who used to say, we should suppress our Laughter on every Occasion.

Cleomelia. I should think it a great Misfortune to have a Mother of so grave a Humour.

Corinna. This Maxim appeared to me at first as extraordinary as it does to you: But I could not dissent from her Opinion as soon as I knew her Motive.

Cleomelia. Can there be any reasonable one assigned for such a Whim?

Celia. I should be very glad to be acquainted with it, for as yet I can by no Means conceive it.

Corinna. This Lady asserted, that no Laughter becomes us, but that which escapes us against our Will; so that we may suppress all other kinds, since we cannot restrain from that which is always pleasing, because it is natural.

Prudentia. Be pleased to explain what you mean by forcing our Laughter beyond its natural Continuation.

Corinna. There are People who are fond of the Appellation of Laughers; who, having laughed heartily at what first excited their Mirth, will continue a forced Laugh a long Time after the Cause is
ceased;

ceased ; which is obnoxious to every one, beause it is easy to perceive it is unnatural.

Teresa. Indeed, Ladies, we shall always find it necessary to have Recourse to Religion, and Christian Humility will be a more infallible Guide in all our Actions, than any we can find in Books, or in our Intercourse with the World.

D I A L O G U E XVI.

ON AFFABILITY.

Sophia. **I** Am just come from a Place where we had a great Dispute ; some said, that *Melantha* was of an affable Disposition, and others asserted she was quite the reverse.

Lucinda. I am of Opinion, that Affability is a Qualification the most conspicuous, and least dubious of any.

Arabella. My Sentiments in this Particular differ wholly from yours, Madam ; and I don't know any Thing concerning which we are so liable to form a wrong Judgment.

Lucretia. But for Instance, Madam, do you doubt whether *Eugenia* be affable, or whether *Lasselia* is not churlish and passionate ?

Arabella. I take Churlishness and Passion to be very distinct Qualities ; and if it were not for contradicting you, I should have said *Lasselia* was the most affable of the two.

Eliza. Dear Madam, you cannot surely think so ; you need but see them together to be of a quite different Opinion.

Angelica. *Eugenia* is affable to outward Appearance ; the soft languishing Tone of her Voice, and her

her Address, are absolutely the reverse of Ill-manners.

Arabella. This is certainly the usual way of judging, whether a Person be affable or not : But what doth she pronounce with all this engaging Sweetness of Voice ? In what Manner doth she behave towards her Husband, her Friends, her Servants, or her Neighbours ?

Lucretia. She is not indeed greatly beloved, and I can't conceive the Reason.

Arabella. And that other Brute, *Lisetta*, too.

Lucinda. She is carested, and I can't think for what.

Arabella. That is however a great Article in her Favour.

Lucretia. She may be lovely, and beloved, without being affable.

Arabella. It is possible to possess many estimable Qualities, without Affability ; but I think it must be very difficult to procure universal Regard, without having it of some Kind or other.

Sophia. Are there then different Sorts of it ?

Lucretia. I believe there may ; there are Persons less sensible, and sprightly, who have notwithstanding Affability in their Nature.

Arabella. There may be others also, whose natural Inclinations are lively, and whose Minds are nevertheless endued with Affability.

Sophia. Wherein then does true Affability consist ?

Arabella. According to my Notion of it, in bearing, without Anger or Regret, whatever may oppose or contradict our Wills.

Eliza. I am not affable then, for I can't endure the least Contradiction with Patience.

Lucinda. And I thoroughly despise those who dissent from my Opinion, but I never express my Resentment.

Arabella.

Arabella. And do you call this Affability?

Lucinda. I think I have a better Title to it than *Eliza*, however, since she is always angry at being contradicted.

Lucretia. And I take her to be more affable than you, as I can't but think there is more Severity in your concealed Scorn, than in her open Resentment.

Arabella. You perceive now, Madam, there is more than one Sort of Affability.

Angelica. I would fain expel Contention from our Conversation.

Arabella. It would then become less desirable, and this Wish doth not become a Person of your apparent Affability, since 'tis requisite to dispute, tho' with Good-Nature.

Angelica. I must confess I am at a Loss to comprehend your Meaning.

Arabella. And why, pray can't you comprehend that a Person should differ from your Opinion? Would you not be willing to be informed, if you were in the wrong, and to convince others, if you knew you were in the right.

Eliza. I should not be easily persuaded to admit the Opinion of others, nor would I chuse to submit, if I had advanced any Thing that would occasion a Dispute.

Arabella. This is truly to want Affability, for we should always submit to Reason, when it appears evident to our Sense, and never dispute for Disputation Sake, especially in Matters of Consequence.

Angelica. I must own I should esteem such a Conduct cowardly.

Arabella. I have seen this Conduct practised by a Lady of extraordinary good Sense, but somewhat prejudiced in Favour of her own Opinion; she argued with a Vivacity natural to her, intermixed

mixed with a little Conceit, and it was visible she thought herself properly qualified to convince her Antagonist; notwithstanding which, she suddenly yielded to the Force of a well-grounded Argument, was at once herself convinced, and acknowledged frankly, she had been to blame.

Lucinda. I should find some Reluctance in following her Example.

Arabella. God forbid, Madam, that we should confound a *well timed Resolution* with Obstinacy: All the Company were charmed with this Lady's good Sense, and she was more admired for this Instance of her Affability, than for all the other Accomplishments which she possessed.

Lucretia. I think that such a Behaviour, far from appearing cowardly, indicates a Superiority of Mind.

Arabella. You are in the right, Madam; nothing can be more noble, than to submit to the Force of Truth and Reason.

Eliza. I have always heard say, that it was courageous to support any Assertion we have advanced.

Arabella. 'Tis courageous not to be overcome with Difficulties, to surmount every Obstacle that occurs either in ourselves or others, and to bear patiently the Hazards which attend our Undertakings, provided they are founded on the Basis Justice and Reason.

Sophia. We have forgot Affability tho'; and what we have been talking of, seems to have no Connection with it.

Arabella. It is immediately connected with it, Madam; there is an Affability of Temper, in bearing every Thing without Regret or Uneasiness, in submitting to the Impulse of Reason, and in desiring to live on good Terms with our Friends.
and

and Associates; and in all these Particulars Affability is most essential.

Angelica. And very rarely to be met with.

Arabella. It may be so for the most Part; notwithstanding there are many Persons who appear unsociable, who are not however so inclined.

Lucretia. We are induced frequently to judge of Affability by outward Appearances, which, nevertheless, sometimes conceal a World of Ill-nature.

Lucinda. However opposite our natural Disposition may be to this Virtue, Is it not possible to acquire it?

Arabella. All the Virtues may be acquired, the Divine Grace assisting our Endeavours, and I can't help thinking, that by a frequent Exercise of Affability in our Actions, we shall soon become more affable than those that are naturally so.

Sophia. I take this Virtue to be inseparable from Humility.

Lucretia. True, and I judge it is equally inseparable from Patience.

Lucinda. This Conversation may prove of great Use to us.

Arabella. Yes, if it induces us to practise the Virtues it recommends.

DIALOGUE XVII.

ON EMULATION.

Lucetta. **E**Mulation is often recommended, and particularly to young Ladies. For my Part, I can't easily distinguish it from Envy.

Lucilla. I take them to be very different notwithstanding.

Lucetta.

Lucetta. Give us then your Sentiments of them.

Lucilla. Envy consists in being angry with any for the good Qualities they possess; and in doing our utmost Endeavours to deprive them of them, which proceeds from a mean Spirit: Emulation excites us to Virtue by how much the more we see others excel therein, to strive to imitate them, and if possible surpass them; and takes Place only in great Minds; so that I think I have Reason to say how much they differ.

Lavinia. Shall we not be accounted envious, if we aim at surpassing others?

Lucilla. No certainly, this is Emulation, Courage, Ambition, and no Reason can be alledged why we should not endeavour to attain all possible Perfection.

Lucetta. I should be fearful of setting Children together by the Ears, were I to teach them this Emulation.

Lucilla. I think it would be instructing them in what is most proper for them to learn.

Lavinia. Are there no other Methods of exciting them?

Lucilla. Those who are naturally vicious, are subdued by Correction, those moderately so, are excited by Rewards, and the good, by the Desire of pleasing, and excelling in every necessary Virtue: But I am ashamed of engrossing all the Discourse to myself, and if *Melafina* would vouchsafe to join the Conversation, I am persuaded she would acquit herself much better than I can do.

Melafina. I cannot express myself near so well, as you, Madam, but my Thoughts concur with yours.

Lucetta. You agree then, likewise, in recommending Emulation?

Melafina. My Opinion is founded on Reason and Experience. I have known Children prevailed on to do whatever they were desired by the
least

least Encouragement, and only by signifying our Approbation of their Conduct.

Lavinia. I should think this Desire of Praise ought not to be encouraged.

Lucilla. Nothing can be more destructive to Youth, than to render them insensible of Commendation.

Lucetta. But Self-Conceit only can make them fond of Praise.

Melafina. Conceit indeed solicits Praise without deserving it, but Honour studies to become worthy of it.

Lavinia. You tell us, Madam, that Youth should be affected with Praise: But pray, is not Virtue the same in all Ages?

Lucilla. Virtue is doubtless always the same, but we must arrive at it by Degrees.

Lucetta. Why may we not as well arrive at once at the Perfection we aim at?

Lucilla. Because such an Attempt would be as fruitless, as to strive to get up to the Top of an House, without ascending regularly by the Stairs.

Lavinia. But you allow, that to be Proficients in Virtue, we must have other Motives besides that of Praise.

Melafina. Other Motives are I own necessary; but we shall more easily persuade good and generous Minds, like those I have already mentioned, than such as are awed by Fear, or allured by Interest.

Lucilla. We can do no Good with those who are careless of pleasing their Governors; and this Indifference affords us but a hopeless Prospect of their future Well-doing.

Lucetta. I cannot easily submit, nor can I comprehend that we should recommend any Thing one Time, which at another we should discourage.

Melafina.

Melafina. It is nevertheless certain, that there is a Time for every Thing, and that there is a Solidity of Thought peculiar to Age that our earlier Years will not admit of.

Lucilla. I must still persist in my Opinion, that young People cannot be too sensible of the Commendations of the Good and Judicious, nor too fond of Honour and Reputation, and that only noble Minds will be desirous of doing all they can to obtain them.

Lavinia. Can you produce any Instances to support what you have advanced?

Lucilla. We seldom find any Persons who consult the Dispositions of Youth; I have known some who would have suffered Martyrdom, as it were, to please their Superiors; and others I have seen, and those a great Number, who have been only governed by Fear.

Lucetta. And do you judge the worse of such as these?

Lucilla. They are of a mean Way of Thinking, And how will they be able to undergo Hardships for the Sake of Reputation, when they come abroad in the World, that won't do their utmost to please those on whom their present Interest depends? Never tell me of such as are incapable of Emulation; for there can never be any Good expected of them.

DIALOGUE XVIII.

On the EDUCATION of St. CYR.

Sophronia. **I** AM greatly delighted, Ladies, with these Conversations calculated for our Amusement,

Amusement, and surely a more entertaining and rational one could never have been found out.

Charlotte. Indeed, Madam, all the other Diversions we are allowed the Use of, do not afford us such Pleasure and Satisfaction.

Clarinda. Speak for yourself, Madam, if you please; for my Part, I can't conceive how Instruction can be termed Amusement.

Alinda. You cannot, surely, Madam, think as you speak.

Antonetta. You are very unfortunate, really, Madam, if you can't instruct yourself without Trouble.

Clarinda. Do you think, Madam, that we should laugh during a Sermon or Catechism.

Sophronia. No, Madam; but I think we may be pleased without laughing.

Clarinda. Laughter however delights me greatly.

Eudocia. But, pray, Madam, tho' you be pleased to hear of the Welfare of a Friend, Would you laugh at it?

Alinda. And if you would conduce to her Welfare, would not your Heart be filled with Transport, without any Inclination to laugh?

Clarinda. I can't very clearly express my Sentiments on this Head; what you mention would certainly greatly delight me; and I know very well I should not laugh at it; nevertheless, I must own I am never better pleased than when I laugh.

Eudocia. Laughter proceeds from something that surprizes us, and appears entertaining or ridiculous; but there are other Causes which afford us much more Pleasure.

Clarinda. But allowing what you say to be true: Where then is the great Pleasure you have found in our late Conversations?

Charlotte. Can there be found a greater? We communicate our Thoughts, others are attentive;

we

we discourse on Subjects abounding with Wit and Truth.

Eudocia. Our Mind is enlightened with Truths we might otherwise perhaps never have conceived, or at least, without a very long Experience.

Sopbronia. Our Sense is not only improved thereby, but our Dispositions are formed for all Kinds of Virtue.

Clarinda. Your Pleasures, Ladies, are of a very serious Nature.

Antonetta. They are however equally agreeable.

Clarinda. But is it possible that you can't find more Pleasure in skipping, dancing, and playing at all Sorts of Games, than in describing Indiscretion, weighing the Difference between Wit and Good-Sense, and other such like Employments.

Eudocia. We may dance, skip about, run, and exercise ourselves as much as we please, as these are equally conducive to our Health, as well as our Pleasure : But when we would amuse ourselves with quieter Diversions, think you there can be any more agreeable than these Conversations, which by learning us to dispute, give us true and just Ideas of every Object.

Alinda. *Clarinda* would rather play at * *la belle Germaine*.

Antonetta. Or sing † *a qui est ce Chariot qui passe & qui repasse*.

Clarinda. Don't make a Jest of me, Ladies, there are others of the same Way of Thinking ; those Games have been in Use ever since there were Children in the World, and they were never required to make Definitions for their Amusement.

Sopbronia. But at present, Madam, Do you
E think

* † Childish Games used in *France*.

think you amuse yourself by exerting so much Wit to support a bad Cause?

Clarinda. I am indeed diverted to see you all against me; tho' I must confess I am equally affected with the Desire of Instruction.

Alinda. What you have said, however, Madam, is directly inconsistent with this End.

Clarinda. 'Tis the Fault of my Nature, Madam.

Alinda. And because our Nature is corrupt, must we abandon ourselves to it, and not endeavour to reap the Benefit of the extraordinary Pains here taken to improve us?

Clarinda. Alas! Madam, the Education of St. Cyr is not exempt from Censure.

Sophronia. Is it possible, Madam? In my Opinion every Body admires it, and has Reason so to do.

Clarinda. They say it makes us too learned, and that we shall find the ill Effects of it.

Eudocia. For my Part, I can never conceive that instructing us in our Religion, and improving our Reason, can be of any bad Consequence.

Clarinda. We may, perhaps, have too much Sense for those with whom we are to live hereafter.

Sophronia. I think that greater Pains are taken to illuminate our Reason, than to refine our Wit.

Eudocia. We shall become the more rational and better Christians for it, and know better how to content ourselves with whatever Fortunes it pleases God to allot us, and by the Intuition of Reason we shall be the better enabled to support and assist those, who are not blessed with any.

DIALOGUE XIX.

ON DEPENDANCE.

Amelia. **L**ET us amuse ourselves to Day with the Thoughts of what we should do in the World, if we were at Liberty.

Leonora. I had rather put off such Thoughts as long as I can, as I dread nothing so much as the Day of Departure from this Place.

Sapphira. *Amelia* doth not pretend to say what she will do, but what she would do, if she could have her Will.

Violetta. But why should we give Scope to our Imagination, only to be the more unfortunate for it hereafter?

Melliora. Because, if we make ourselves uneasy about what may happen to us then, we should be melancholy now, instead of recreating ourselves.

Julia. And could you please yourself with the Expectation of what will never happen?

Amelia. Yes, Madam, is it not best to be as merry as we can?

Violetta. I had much rather know as nearly as possible, what Course I should take when I leave *St. Cyr*.

Sapphira. What Use is it to us to torment ourselves before that Time comes?

Violetta. We need not torment ourselves; but only prepare against it, that we may not be surprized by a sudden Change.

Melliora. Tho' we may undergo Hardships, yet we shall be at Liberty, and that Consideration would render every Burden easy in my Opinion.

Leonora. Describe to us, if you please, this State of Liberty, for as yet I don't understand it.

Melliora. By Liberty, I mean doing whatever comes into our Head.

Leonora. But to come to particulars, When you leave St. Cyr, whither will you go?

Melliora. To my Father's, he will not controul me; he goes often abroad, and I shall be Mistress of the House.

Leonora. All these are but in general, What would you do in the Morning for Instance?

Melliora. I would rise late, dress myself, and go to Mass.

Violetta. With whom? By yourself?

Melliora. My Maid should follow me.

Leonora. You imagine then that you shall keep a Servant only to dress and follow you? Well, it shall be granted; suppose yourself now returned from Mass.

Amelia. She will now go to Dinner, if her Papa be come Home.

Julia. And what, if he is not?

Sapphira. She will wait for him.

Leonora. Here she is in a State of Dependance.

Julia. And if the Dinner is bad, or not well prepared, Who is to bear the Blame?

Violetta. The Mistress of the House, who is to answer for it all.

Leonora. Let us have done with the Dinner; your Father is gone out again, How do you employ the Afternoon?

Melliora. In paying, or receiving Visits.

Violetta. You regard nobody, you are twenty Years of Age, and are now making and receiving Visits: Who bears you Company?

Sapphira. Some Friend of her Mother's.

Leonora. You can do nothing then of yourself; and you must depend on the Leisure, Health, and Pleasure of this Friend.

Amelia.

Amelia. I don't admire this Plan : Let us propose another ; I love neither Father nor Mother.

Julia. Well then, Whither do you intend to go ?

Amelia. To wait on a Princess ; she allows me a grand Dress, I attend her to the Ball, or the Play, or to wait on the Nobility, where I am genteely entertained :

Violetta. Are you familiar with her ?

Amelia. I am her Favourite.

Julia. Doth she allow you to leave her ?

Amelia. Do you enjoy any Rest ? Can you have whom you will to see you ? In a Word, Have you a Moment's Liberty ?

Sapphira. You have no Devotion in your Projects ; I would have that above all, and retire with a Companion of my own Way of Thinking, join our Fortunes, be employed in the same Exercises, enjoy the same Refreshments, serve one another by Turns, and fit ourselves for Eternity together.

Leonora. She should properly be one in Years.

Sapphira. Are there not old People very reasonable ?

Leonora. Doubtless, and they are commonly more so than others ; but as we have before observed, you must be subject to the Health, the Will, and the Humour of such a Companion ; in such a State you are more dependant than in St. Cyr, engaged in a more melancholy Way of Life ; you see nothing but your Chamber and the Church, wear a plain Dress, and are detached from all worldly Enjoyments : these are Austerities far more than those in a Convent.

Amelia. You dishearten me quite, Madam, and I know not now what Course to steer ; allow me then, for my Consolation, what they call a Castle in the Air.

Leonora. I consent to it.

Amelia. I am a Widow, rich, without Children, or near Relations, my own Mistress, arrived at Years of Discretion; I have an House in Town for the Winter, another in the Country for the Summer, and nothing else to do, but divert myself; you cannot deny, surely, that I shall be happy.

Leonora. Yes, if no Mischance befall you, to interrupt your Tranquility.

Sapphira. What should happen to her?

Julia. The Villainy of a litigious Neighbour, who for some Detriment she has undesignedly done him, commences a Suit against her, or the brutal Insolence of a Clown to a defenceless Woman.

Violetta. A Sportsman may destroy her Game.

Julia. Or a Gentleman dispute her Place in the Church.

Amelia. But there is Justice for every one.

Leonora. Then you must go to Law, and depend upon your Judges, and upon all those whose Councils you solicit.

Sapphira. Allow me to add to *Amelia's* Plan, a Protection from the Court to support me in such Exigencies.

Leonora. Without obtaining it by your Services, or by being assiduous in your Attendance there.

Julia. Such Ideas are impracticable.

Amelia. Well then, What are your Conclusions?

Leonora. That even Men depend upon one another, and Women much more so; our Sex is weak, and requires Assistance and Protection, and this is so evidently apparent, that we dare not live in a House by ourselves.

Violetta. We dare not venture abroad without a Man in our Company, for Fear of meeting with many Insults.

Amelia. There are no Men in our Convents.

Leonora.

Leonora. There are however without Doors to assist us occasionally.

Sapphira. How many Houses are there in *Paris* inhabited by none but Women?

Julia. Their Neighbours are ready to help them, if they render themselves worthy their Regard.

Amelia. Upon the whole then, we may conclude ourselves very unfortunate.

Leonora. Yes, when we become unreasonable in our Desires, when we wish for Impossibilities, and are not contented with our Condition, and to live in such a State of Dependance, as we may plainly see we cannot avoid.

D I A L O G U E XX.

On the INCONVENIENCES of MARRIAGE.

Chariclea. **I** AM overjoyed at meeting with you, Ladies, and if I had made Choice of my Company, it would not have happened better than Chance has determined it.

Melissa. You appear so melancholy within these few Days, that we have a Mind to divert you, and 'tis that which brings us hither.

Celia. Your Temper seems indeed quite changed.

Chariclea. I will not indulge my Pensiveness in your Company; but I must own I can't help considering more and more, as my Time of Departure from this Place approaches, what Method of Life I shall pursue.

Melliora. Sufficient to the Day is the Evil there-

of: Why then will you take thought for the Mor-
row?

Chariclea. But it is good to consult what we shall
do hereafter.

Sophia. There is no State in Life without its
Inconveniencies.

Lucinda. We should consider these well, it is
therefore good to foresee them.

Chariclea. That is what I should be glad to do.

Melliora. That of a Recluse is the most liable to
Inconveniencies, and I can't conceive how People
can consent to confine themselves to a Cloister for
Life.

Lucinda. And don't you reckon Marriage a
Confinement? And doth not one Condition re-
quire as much Confidence as the other?

Chariclea. The very Thought of it strikes Ter-
ror into me, when I think of subjecting myself
to a Master whom I know nothing of.

Melliora. Are you any more acquainted with the
Abbess to whom you are going to yield your O-
bedience?

Celia. And who may be exceedingly unreason-
able.

Lucinda. A Husband may be so too; if he is of
an irregular Conduct; we are exposed to Suffer-
ings by all his Extravagancies.

Chariclea. In a Convent we know the utmost
that will be required of us, and if we must yield
Obedience, there are others in the same Interest
with ourselves, and who will not submit to any
Demand contrary to the Rules of the House.

Sophia. Don't talk to me of Rules, and sacri-
ficing our Liberty.

Lucinda. Don't you sacrifice it to a Husband?

Melliora. Some of them however are indulgent,
and good natur'd, that will love you, and deserve
your Esteem.

Chariclea.

Chariclea. There are so without Doubt, but you are ne'er the happier in your Choice, and the best are always tyrannical.

Sophia. Why do you imagine all Men are Tyrants?

Lucinda. Because the Duties of a Wife are tyrannical, and a Husband, however indulgent he may be, will insist on your being a good Wife, and consulting the Advantage of him and your Family.

Melissa. In what then do you suppose the Duty of a good Wife to consist?

Chariclea. In neglecting herself, and studying only the Good of her Family.

Celia. To neglect herself, is a Term adapted to the Convent, and not known in the World.

Lucinda. I know not whether the Phrase be proper to the Convent, or not, but the Practice is used in the World, and if one would specify all the Duties of a good Wife, it would require an infinite deal of Time.

Celia. A Wife rises, dresses, receives Company, walks abroad, and diverts herself; all this is not very rigid.

Melliora. She goes to see Sights, makes Parties of Pleasure, and amuses herself agreeably.

Lucinda. And her Husband is satisfied withal; you suppose him very complying.

Chariclea. Do you imagine then such a Wife must forfeit her Reputation?

Sophia. No, she may preserve that, notwithstanding these Enjoyments.

Melissa. 'Tis the Life of a Wife that I am speaking of, for I can't think it possible to live without Reputation.

Lucinda. A good Wife rises early, that she may have the more Time for her Business, she begins the Day with Prayer, she gives Orders to her Servants, looks after her Children, takes Care of their

Education, prepares herself to receive Gentlemen, whom her Husband sometimes brings Home with him to Dinner, who perhaps are not very agreeable to her Liking; she is herself the best Servant she has about her in getting every Thing ready; when Dinner is over, she stays with the Company against her Will; at last they go away, she employs herself at her Work, or at her Domestic Business, she writes to her Attornies, and seldom stirs abroad: Thus the Day is ended, and she begins the next.

Melliora. If this is the Employment of a Wife, I had rather be a Hermit.

Melissa. Such a Wife however is not unhappy.

Lucinda. No, I intended only the Picture of a good Wife, contented, and moderately rich.

Celia. Can you then describe one more unhappy?

Lucinda. With Ease I can, for Instance, the Woman that loves her Husband, and is not beloved by him, and is of Consequence jealous of him.

Melliora. That is frightful indeed.

Melissa. Should you be better pleased with one that hates her Husband, is beloved by him, and troubled with his Caresses, his Jealousies, Tyrannies, and every Thing that can be represented more detestable?

Sophia. These are extraordinary Adventures; pray let us into the Knowledge of more common Conditions.

Lucinda. Well then! A Man and his Wife live tolerably quiet together, without any extraordinary Affection; the Husband maintains another Woman whom he loves better than his Wife, whereby he ruins himself, and brings his Family to the Parish. Distresses of this Kind are too frequent.

Melissa. Another Couple live peaceably together; but the Wife is unhappy in Child-bearing. I know one, who at every Labour, had the Misfortune

tune of seeing the Child born without its Legs, and at least all her Children were still-born, she was obliged to suffer these Extremities, and could have no Help. In short, Examples of this Sort, that we know of, are infinite, and there are several others that we know nothing of.

Lucinda. The Woman that marries, devotes herself to Slavery and Death, there are but too many Instances of it in the World.

Chariclea. Really, Madam, you would make us dread the Thoughts of Marriage, and you would have all Women become Nuns.

Lucinda. I should be very sorry for that, for a bad Nun would not be more happy than a married Woman.

Sophia. What would you advise then?

Lucinda. To consider the Accidents to which all Conditions are liable, and never to dream that one of them can be happy.

Melissa. What Course then would you prescribe to a Friend?

Lucinda. To pray to God for Success before she enters upon any State of Life.

Celia. You refer us then to Religion.

Lucinda. That alone will render the Misfortunes of Life supportable.

DIALOGUE XXI.

On the PLEASURES of the WORLD.

Arabella. **I** AM overjoy'd to see you again, Ladies, and I assure you I have been very impatient for the Honour of your Company.

Eliza. Can you be sincere in what you say, Madam?

Madam? Is it possible you should like better to be here than at *Versailles*?

Angelica. I can hardly believe it; for I can't think but that Place must afford much more Entertainment than this.

Arabella. Nothing can be more opposite, Ladies, than the Opinion of the World, with Respect to its Pleasures, and what they are in Reality.

Lucetta. But, Madam, Have not you seen the King, a magnificent Palace, and great Numbers of the Quality there?

Arabella. Yes, Madam, and I don't tell you that I was not pleased with the Sight while it lasted; but that is but for a short Time, and we may very soon be acquainted with the greatest Beauties of the Place.

Eliza. And what Novelty do you find here? What can you see in this Place, more than you have been long accustomed to?

Arabella. I find here an Order which makes my Time pass agreeably away; one Employment succeeding another in due Regularity; we learn something new every Day; enjoy perfect Freedom in our Amusements, a Life of Innocence and Tranquility, undisturbed by Care and Anxiety of Mind.

Lucretia. You may say farther, Madam, that we may serve God, which is the only true Felicity.

Arabella. I would not, Madam, have the Name of God introduced in a Conversation which we intended only for our Diversion; but 'tis to him we owe the peaceable Enjoyment of all our Happiness in this World.

Angelica. We are as well assured of this Truth, as you, Madam; but we were willing to hear your Sentiments, which have really afforded us great Satisfaction.

DIALOGUE. XXII.

ON GOOD NATURE.

SCENE I.

Cynthia. I HEAR that *Violetta* is gone into the Country, and has taken *Leonora* along with her.

Amanda. I am informed so too, and that *Lavinia* has taken Offence at her giving *Leonora* the Preference.

Cynthia. That is indeed astonishing, as I don't know any Lady of a better Temper than *Lavinia*.

Amanda. I am of your Opinion; she is for certain quite engaging; she is agreeable in her Person, has a great deal of Wit, is complaisant to all, and communicates her Gaiety to those about her, and if I could render myself worthy her Acquaintance, I should prefer her to any one in the World.

Cynthia. I readily allow all that you have said of her; notwithstanding she is not much beloved.

Amanda. Perhaps that is owing to Envy: There are some who can't endure that Merit should be encouraged, and think the Praises bestowed on the Possessors of it a Tribute only due to themselves.

Cynthia. Here comes a good Friend of *Leonora's*.

SCENE II.

Cynthia. You have lost for some Time your constant Companion.

Lauriana. I have so, and am in so much Trouble on that Account, you can't imagine.

Amanda. *Leonora* must surely have some good Qualities, which she conceals, which make her agreeable, for those that appear, don't seem to me to be very extraordinary.

Lauriana.

Lauriana. If you knew her as well as I do, you would not easily pass your Time without her.

Cynthia. Has she a great Wit ?

Lauriana. No, but middling, and not very refined.

Amanda. Is she entertaining ?

Lauriana. She is naturally pretty serious.

Amanda. She seems however fond of Pleasure, and Conversation.

Lauriana. She readily acquiesces in the Dispositions of others ; but she is not seen to have any particular Taste of her own.

Amanda. I imagine however she has no great Relish for Retirement, for she is seldom alone.

Lauriana. That's because her Friends will scarcely allow her to be so : But when I have been along with her, and my Business obliged me to leave her, she appeared to me to be very easy and contented.

Cynthia. Do you venture to take the Liberty of leaving her alone, when you have brought her to your Apartment for your mutual Recreation ?

Lauriana. I take any Liberties with her, I take her abroad, I leave her alone, I engage in Discourse with other People before her, I disclose my Grievances to her, talk to her of my private Business, I forget myself often, and think myself alone when I wish to be so, tho' she is in my Room, and when I am desirous of Company, I find in her the most agreeable Associate ; in a Word, I suffer no Uneasiness but in being separated from her.

Amanda. You are certainly prejudiced in her Favour.

Cynthia. I should not be very well pleased, to be left alone in that Manner, as I should think if my Friends liked my Company, they might confine their Discourse to me.

Lauriana.

Lauriana. But my Friend will put up with any Thing ; I must leave you to write a Letter to her.

SCENE III.

Olympia. Do you know that *Lavinia* is fallen out with her best Friend ?

Amanda. How could she fall out with a Lady of so sweet a Temper ? Do you know the Reason ?

Olympia. I have been but slightly informed of it ; but here comes *Narcissa*, who always knows every Thing, she will let us into it.

SCENE IV.

Olympia. We were speaking of the Dispute between *Lucinda* and her Friend *Lavinia*, Can you tell us the Particulars ?

Narcissa. Yes, certainly, I know them very well, for I am partly the Occasion.

Amanda. If we may without Offence ask the Favour, you will oblige us with a Recital of the Affair.

Narcissa. I went to pay a Visit to *Lucinda* ; and had not been there above a Quarter of an Hour, when in came *Lavinia* ; *Lucinda* seemed to me to receive her very well : However, she was not of the same Opinion, and said, with a Tone of Voice indicating Resentment, I believe I have intruded unseasonably, and that the best Thing I can do will be to return whence I came. And why pray, said *Lucinda*, do you think we are not very glad to see you ? Because, returned *Lavinia*, warmly, I see it very plain, and that you were in Confusion at my Entrance. Not at all, replied we, we have no particular Concerns. Are you angry ? said *Lucinda*. Angry ! answered the other, I am never so ; What, would you make a Baby of me ? No, replied her Friend, but 'tis possible you might have had Reason. This is not the

the first Time, resum'd *Lavinia*, that I have found out I am an unwelcome Guest, and I shall trouble you with no more of my Visits. Upon which she left us, without our being able to detain her; I desired *Lucinda* to follow and persuade her back again, but judge of my Surprize, when she made Answer, that she was not a little pleased to get rid of such an Acquaintance, and that it was impossible to keep on good Terms with her long together; so that there are small Hopes of an Accommodation.

Amanda. If any one else had told me this Adventure, I could not have believed it.

SCENE V.

Cynthia. You are welcome Home, Madam, you seem returned in perfect Health.

Violetta. Yes indeed, Madam, I am very well, and the Fortnight that I have been in the Country has passed away very agreeably.

Cynthia. Had you much Company there?

Violetta. I had none with me but *Leonora*, nor did I desire any more.

Cynthia. There must needs be a great Friendship between you, that you could entertain each other so long and with so much Satisfaction.

Violetta. Our Friendship was not so strongly confirmed when I entreated the Favour of her Company, but now my Affection for her will never cease, while she continues faithful to me.

Cynthia. That Lady has a Charm about her, for every Body that knows her is continually speaking well of her, which is a certain Sign that she deserves it.

Violetta. Her Good-Nature is her Charm.

Cynthia. I admire the Spirit of *Lavinia*, above the best Temper in the World.

Violetta. You will not always be of that Mind; her Spirit may be sometimes seasonable enough, its Duration of pleasing is indeed more lively; but for

for a constant Companion, Good-Humour is entitled to the Preference. *Lavinia* can be agreeable when she pleases; but we must wait upon and watch her Motions, she is not always disposed to be affable, she is irregular, soon angry, difficult, and exacts too great Homage.

Cynthia. Is it not proper to treat our Friends with Respect?

Violetta. We should behave indeed with Respect to all the World; but we should not however enact it ourselves; we should weigh well the Intentions of others, and not imagine they design to offend us, we should prevent their Desires, and allow them perfect Freedom in conversing with us, and for my Part, nothing is so irksome to me as an affected Wisdom, because it at the same Time supposes me a Fool.

Cynthia. If it is offensive, we should never have any.

Violetta. It should be imperceptible, and never used to triumph over others.

Cynthia. Good-Humour then is, in your Opinion, sufficient Merit.

Violetta. 'Tis a great Step towards pleasing in Conversation; tho' there are to be sure other good Qualities requisite, as Secrecy, and Discretion.

Cynthia. Wherein then doth this Good-Nature consist?

Violetta. In resembling *Leonora*, in not being easily provoked, in behaving with Respect, and exacting none in Return, in regulating our Temper to a Degree of Certainty, and in avoiding Complaints.

Cynthia. What, Are we not to make an Answer, when an Affront is given us?

Violetta. 'Tis the Peevishness of our Temper, that misconstrues often what is said to us: We should pass over many Things, and make no Reply, as not supposing any Affront intended.

Cynthia.

Cynthia. You have convinced me a good while ;
but I was charmed with hearing you describe the
Advantages of good Humour.

D I A L O G U E XXIII.

The different CHARACTERS of the MIND.

Melinda. **I** Heartily wish we could establish among
us those rational Conversations that are
recommended to us.

Sopbronia. We should reap the Benefit of them,
and render ourselves Examples of their Utility.

Melafina. We must entertain a high Opinion of
ourselves, to set up for Examples to others.

Sopbronia. We are obliged to it, and the Fear of
having too good an Opinion of ourselves, would be
but a bad Reason for not doing as we ought.

Lucilla. All those Arguments are tiresome.

Melinda. Will you play at any Game?

Melafina. You were not willing, you were for
Conversation.

Melinda. I was indeed desirous of it, but if you
are inclined to play, we will defer the Conversation
'till another Opportunity.

Lucilla. We have no Games but what are trou-
blesome.

Clarinda. Is it possible that so many as we have,
none of them can please you?

Lucilia. No.

Sopbronia. And what would you do then?

Lucilla. Divert myself.

Sopbronia. At what?

Lucilla. I don't know really.

Melafina. Return to your Conversation, Ladies,
we must not contradict you.

Melinda. We will be agreeable to play, if you
ke it better.

Melafina.

Melafina. No, Madam, we had better Discourse; but I would fain know how you can reconcile this Desire of improving our Reason, with the Prohibition of exciting our Wit and Curiosity.

Sophronia. Do you think then there is no Difference between Wit and Reason?

Lucilla. Do you think such Distinctions are entertaining?

Clarinda. They are however of great Use.

Melinda. Proceed, Madam, if you please to clear up this Difference.

Sophronia. I take Wit to be a piercing, brilliant Light, which shines upon, and diverts others as well as itself, but that it neither renders us wiser or happier.

Clarinda. And Reason?

Sophronia. This directs our Conduct, makes us agreeable in the Sight of others, represents Things to us in their real Light, opposes our Passions and Prejudices, and enables us to conquer our own Foibles, and bear with those of others.

Melinda. But won't *Prudentia* enter into Discourse with us, and give us her Opinion?

Prudentia. I don't like to speak, Are there not enough of you without me?

Sophronia. We can't do without you, and I am sure if you will, you are very capable of discoursing with us.

Prudentia. You would oblige me by excusing me.

Melafina. These Ladies would make great Wits of us.

Melinda. We would make you reasonable People.

Clarinda. Every Body is not possessed of your Merit, Madam.

Sophronia. You don't think so, Ladies; but why should we amuse ourselves with what is useless and unprofitable, instead of endeavouring to improve each other?

Clarinda. I can't see how we can understand reasonable Arguments, unless we are affected with them; to do this I would sacrifice every Thing. *Melinda.*

Melinda. We are very near the Possession of Reason, when we love to hear it talked of, and this Desire proceeds entirely from Reason.

Clarinda. You think we have none then?

Sophronia. You might, if you would; but you are not disposed, I see, for Conversation; let us play, therefore.

Melafina. I can't play To-day, every Thing is irksome to me.

Clarinda. And these Ladies are agreeable to any Thing, either to talk, or play, and acquiesce in the Will of others; if this is Reason, I must confess 'tis very amiable.

Melinda. It is so for certain, and induces us to comply with every one, without insisting on our own Pleasure, always ready to submit, even when we are in the right.

Melafina. Indeed, Madam, Reason must needs bear the Sway, since she is so beautiful, she should never submit.

Sophronia. Reason, 'tis true, is condescending to all; she has indeed great Power, and convinces us of her Influence, whether we have it ourselves, or not.

Lucilla. I am quite tired of hearing so much about it.

Clarinda. I can't think so, what you say is only to induce us to dispute upon it.

Melafina. When we have talked about it as long as we can, what shall we be the better for it?

Sophronia. We shall be assuredly more reasonable for it, which is all we can desire: But can we possibly put an End to the Conversation, without *Prudentia's* Opinion?

Prudentia. You will insist upon it, Madam, when I beg to be excused.

Clarinda. We will not be discouraged, and you may, one Day, perhaps, be more rational than any of us, notwithstanding your present Reluctance.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE XXIV.

On Restraint in all Conditions of LIFE.

An old Lady. **H**OW is it, that I see four young Ladies of St. Cyr together at once? Is it possible I should be indebted to Chance only for this Pleasure?

Corinna. No, Madam; we must confess it is an Appointment of our own, and having had more than one Dispute among ourselves, we agreed to refer them to your Arbitration.

Lady. I am always ready to oblige you in every Thing you desire, and shall be always delighted with such agreeable Company.

Corinna. Our Disputes were on the Subject of Restraint; we have heard a great deal of Talk about it at St. Cyr, and in *Eudocia's* Opinion very reasonably. *Alinda* thinks that Nuns are under continual Restraint, and I agree with her, that they may be ignorant of what is transacted in the World, where there is, perhaps, less Restraint than they imagine.

Eudocia. If Life answers the Description given of it at St. Cyr, it would not much attract our Admiration.

Alinda. True, for there can be no Pleasure without Liberty.

Eudocia. I must own my Mistresses have often persuaded me to it, and the little Time I have been in the World, I am induced to think they told us true.

Corinna. Is it possible then, that no Condition of Life is free from Restraint?

Lady. This you must endeavour to find out, and begin by your own Experience.

Alinda.

Alinda. I have had so little Freedom since I left the Convent, that I count as nothing what I suffered, in Hopes that a Change in my Condition would set me at Liberty.

Corinna. I thought you had Liberty enough; they say that your Mother is all Good-Nature, and that you are more Mistress at Home, than she is.

Alinda. That is very true; but she has a bad State of Health, and is very devout withal; I can never stir out without her, and we have never any Pleasure at Home.

Eudocia. I have retired for three Months to the House of a Lady, whence I am shortly to return to my Father; I am quite tir'd out; however, I endeavour all I can to please her, and this Intention subjects me to a Restraint that were it of long Continuance, would be insupportable.

Corinna. I am going to be married, and then I hope to be made Amends for all I now suffer from a Grandmother, who is perpetually worrying me with repeated Cautions, in whatever I shall say or do, so that I always sit upon Thorns.

Charlotte. My ill Fortune reduces me to Servitude, and I am with very good Sort of People who have a great Regard for my Welfare: But there could not have been found any more opposite to my Inclinations; I don't believe I can continue long with them.

Lady. What Occasion have you for me when your own Experience shews you that no State of Life is exempt from Restraint?

Alinda. All our Situations, Madam, are dependant, and when I am established, I shall be by myself, and do whatever I please.

Lady. You will have your Husband to please, and then you will have a Master.

Alinda. This Master will love me, and consult only my Happiness.

Lady.

Lady. You may perhaps displease him, or he may displease you : It is almost impossible your Tempers should be alike ; he may ruin you by his Method of Living : He may be covetous, and refuse you every Thing : You would indeed think me tedious, were I to describe to you the Disadvantages of Marriage.

Eudocia. I am beloved by my Father, and can do what I please when I am with him.

Lady. You will do what he desires of you, which may be directly contrary to your Inclination.

Corinna. The Man to whom I am betrothed is honest tho poor.

Lady. You will love him, if it be so, and will suffer with him, and for him ; Children will encrease your Poverty, and God grant that Necessity, which too often sours our Tempers, may not interrupt your Union ; all these Things occasion great Alterations.

Alinda. Are there then none, Madam, at Liberty to do as they please ?

Lady. There are People who do so sometimes ; but that happens but seldom and doth not last long.

Eudocia. What Restraint doth a rich Widow without Children undergo ?

Lady. That of submitting to Reason, Custom, and Decorum.

Alinda. Reason doth not deny us the Use of Diversions.

Lady. No, but then it must be only for a moderate Time, and with a due Regard to Propriety in the Choice of our Companions ; and but seldom, if we would preserve our Reputation.

Eudocia. Can we lose our Reputation, and do no Harm ?

Lady. A Woman cannot maintain her Character, if she is observed to be always taking her Pleasure.

Alinda.

Alinda. And what will the World say of her?

Lady. That she is too fond of going abroad, and that a good Wife will be content to stay at Home.

Corinna. And why stay at Home, if she do no Harm in going abroad?

Lady. Because the Merit of a Wife consists in observing Moderation, in not indulging all her Inclinations, in not devoting herself to Pleasures, tho' innocent; and all this Self-Denial imposes Restraint.

Eudocia. You frighten me, Madam, and make me desire to live by myself.

Lady. That would be an intolerable Restraint, for you would often have a Mind to go out and see the World.

Alinda. To live in an agreeable Family, without Husband, or without Children, would be more satisfactory.

Lady. We must submit to Restraint, in order to qualify us for Conformity to the Will of others, at least in our Turn.

Eudocia. When we are old, our Character established, and that we have no farther Connection with the World, Are we not without Restraint?

Lady. No, Society always requires it; we must restrain ourselves, that we may not become burdensome to others; we must be silent when we would speak, and speak when we would be silent; we must conform to the Will of others; in a Word, all that you have heard of Respect, Politeness, knowing how to live, other People's Affairs; all this, in plain *English*, is to know how to submit to Constraint.

Corinna. I see no Resource but in Religion, Will not that enable me to live without Restraint?

Lady. No, Religion will teach you to like it, and that is indeed, the only Method of enjoying your Liberty.

DIALOGUE XXV.

On LABOUR.

Laura. **W**HAT! Madam, are you at Work on a Day of Recreation?

Euphemia. My Mistresses have given me Leave.

Amelia. I am very sorry, that you are deprived of the Pleasure of diverting yourself, and walking abroad.

Leonora. And I, on the contrary, envy the Lady the Liberty allowed her of working all Day long.

Laura. You judge of others, by yourself, Madam; you love Work, but I fancy, if *Euphemia* were left to her Inclination, she would prefer Pleasure to Labour.

Euphemia. I indeed approve of Amusement, but I had much rather work than play.

Amelia. What Pleasure, pray, can be found in Labour?

Euphemia. That of Employment, of not losing our Time, of accustoming ourselves to leave off Diversions, and of having nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves.

Laura. 'Tis true, indeed, that by indulging the Design of making every Thing submit to my Pleasure, and by giving myself over, as has been said, to Gaiety, I found myself much at a Loss to comply with the Taste of my Companions, which was very different from my own.

Amelia. And I have undergone a severe Reprimand from my Mistresses, which has given me more Uneasiness, than all the Recreation in the World can give me Pleasure.

Euphemia. And I never found these Disadvantages in my Work.

F

Sapphira.

Sapphira. But have you not likewise found a Pleasure in it?

Euphemia. Besides that of seeing my Work go forward, I have exceeded my Mistresses Expectations. I have attracted their Commendation, and they have recommended my Example to my Companions: I acquire a Habit of Diligence and Industry, which will save me many Reprimands at St. Cyr, and will afford me great Satisfaction in whatever Place I may hereafter chance to be.

Sapphira. There are, I find, numerous Advantages in Industry, that I never hitherto conceived.

Leonora. The Love of Work alone is of itself an estimable Treasure, it calms the Passions, employs the Mind, and drives out Idleness, the Root of all Evils.

Euphemia. 'Tis true, indeed, that since I am become fond of Work, I have hardly any Thing to reproach myself with. My Mistresses are well pleased with me, whereas before, I was reprov'd by them almost every Hour in the Day.

Silvia. You may add still farther to enhance the Love of Work, Madam, that it makes our Time pass away profitably and agreeably; and doth not allow us Leisure for Vexation.

Celia. It is in a more especial Manner requisite to our Sex, and I have heard it asserted by Persons of Sense and distinguished Piety, that a Girl must either be industrious, or a Coquette.

Sapphira. And why so, Madam?

Celia. Because we must necessarily be supposed to have some Taste, we can't live entirely without Pleasure; and if we don't find it in a useful Employment, it is natural to seek it elsewhere, and we rarely meet with any but what are too dangerous.

Leonora. In short, What can one of our Sex do, that cannot stay at Home, or take any Pleasure in the

the domestic Duties of her House? She has no other Resource than to seek it in Play, Company, or Shows: Can there be any Thing so dangerous, not only with Respect to Piety, but to our Reputation also?

Amelia. I agree with you, Madam, in the Dangers attendant on such Kinds of Pleasure, and I purpose to betake myself to Work, when I have no Relish for the innocent Amusements of Youth; but in the mean Time, I am resolved to enjoy myself, and defer more serious Employment to an Age, when, in my Opinion, they will be much more reasonable.

Leonora. How! Dear Madam, can we then be reasonable too soon, and would you consent to be treated like a Child? At ten or twelve Years of Age, you should be able to manage your Family Affairs, and to take upon you the Care of your Sisters.

Silvia. Add to this, Madam, that we cannot too soon acquire good Habits, and that we shall never take a Liking to Work, unless we accustom ourselves to it in our Youth.

Sapphira. As I may probably, when I go from hence, be obliged to depend upon my Work, I am contented to prepare myself for it betimes.

Leonora. Tho' we should not be urged to it by Necessity, yet it behoves us, as we would answer our Character as Christians, to be industrious.

Silvia. It is an indispensable Obligation upon all Men, ever since Sin came into the World: For observe, when *Adam* had sinned, God did not allow him to make Atonement, by suffering him to pass his Life in Indolence in the Desert, but said to him: Of the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread.

Euphemia. This Reflection surprizes me, for I did not think it necessary to fatigue ourselves with

Work, but only to employ ourselves, and I never undertook any Work, but when my Inclination prompted me to it.

Amelia. My Motive was not so laudable, for I never worked but for the Sake of seeming industrious, without caring whether I made any Progress or no.

Leonora. Your Motive, Madam, is indeed worse than not loving Work; for it is very dishonourable to live at the Expence of a House, and do no Manner of Service in Return.

Amelia. I must confess that bodily Labour is irksome to me, and I should like much better Employment for the Mind.

Sylvia. That is as prejudicial to our Sex, as the other is advantageous: Silence, Modesty, and Simplicity are our Portion.

Celia. When *Solomon* describes a virtuous Woman, he doth not say she is learned, but observes, she seeketh Wool and Flax, and layeth her Hand to the Spindle, and maketh her Wisdom appear in the Work of her Hands.

Amelia. I can hardly submit to such Injunctions as these! I am wholly for exercising my Mind.

Leonora. Let us endeavour to be reasonable, Ladies, and as much of a Christian Principle as we can, and we shall be happy both in this World and the next; the Wits of our Sex will be ridicul'd by Men for their superficial Accomplishments, and will displease God by their Arrogance and Presumption.

DIALOGUE XXVI.

On GOOD CONDUCT.

Violetta. **W**HEN we commend a Lady for her good Conduct, what do we understand by it?

Lucinda. That she is virtuous and not conceited.

Angelica. This is for certain an essential Point, but I always thought good Conduct had a more extensive Import.

Lucinda. I should be glad to hear it particularly described.

Angelica. Good Conduct then consists in discharging our Duty, in governing ourselves, and in avoiding all Manner of Excess.

Melafina. And in being as punctual and regular as we can in our Affairs.

Violetta. I know we should avoid Excess, and every Thing else that is bad, But is Conduct requisite in Matters of Indifference?

Angelica. We should have it always, and as *Melafina*, observes, our Conduct should be as regular as possible.

Lucinda. And what would be the Consequence, Madam, if I were to be irregular in my Employment, if, for Instance, I were to Work one Day, and play another?

Angelica. There can be no Judgment form'd of your Conduct in two Days only, but if you were to work three Months successively, and play the three Months next ensuing, you would be liable to be blam'd for running to Extreame.

Violetta. What! may I not be allow'd to visit a Friend every Day, and to pass my whole Time in the Company of a Person of Merit?

Melafina. You will shew a much better Conduct in observing a Medium, and will thereby avoid the Distaste which, usually, follows so great Extreame.

Angelica. There can be nothing more opposite to good Conduct, than those very Extreame.

Violetta. You are over-wise, Madam, and I find restrain your Inclinations in every Respect.

Melafina. We have been long ago satisfied, that what is call'd Merit consists in Self-restraint.

Angelica. We are made Amends by the Peace of Mind, and Honour resulting from good Conduct, for all that we suffer by a little Restraint.

Lucinda. But why are we requir'd to submit to Restraint in what is harmless?

Angelica. Because that Conduct we are speaking of is not barely comprehended in the avoiding of Evil, we must specify it likewise by doing Good.

Lucinda. Would you hinder us too from praying to God as often as we have a Mind so to do?

Melafina. Yes, we should not pray all one Day, and think nothing of it the next; we should make an End of our Prayers in order to fulfil other Duties; we should shorten our Prayers to avoid continuing them to an Extremity, and in order to qualify us the better to pray every Day of our Lives.

Violetta. We cannot deny, Madam, the Truth of your Assertion, but such a Practice as this is quite unfashionable.

Angelica. Our Inclinations are not always discreet enough to be wholly indulg'd; we should frequently oppose them, sometimes suppress them, and always restrain them; and this is the Conduct in which you would be instructed.

Violetta. Let us return to that good Friend, to whose Service you will not suffer us to devote ourselves.

Angelica. We should never do this, we should
be

be always Mistresses of ourselves, and have Regard to the Time to come: This intimate Friend may disappoint you, perhaps desert you for another, or you may probably grow weary of her, and the surest Way of becoming so, is by devoting yourself wholly to her Service.

Melasma. In case you give your whole Time and Attention to this Friend, what will become of your others, your near Relations? Can you return to them? Will you find them ready to receive you when this Favourite shall appear to fall off, either by Sickness or any other Event in Life which may chance to separate you?

Lucinda. What Circumspection do you require indeed! And do you then never act naturally, and of your own Accord?

Angelica. If we were to act naturally, we should be perpetually in Fault; we should be one Day wholly taken up with one Thing, and the next with another; we should commence a Treaty of Friendship, and immediately take a Distaste to it; we should fall out with our Friends, we should be wanting in our Duty, we should be always complaining, should be either too frugal or too liberal; we should now be for Retirement, and the next Moment for appearing abroad in the World; we should be religious for three Months, and afterwards Libertines; one Time fancy Dress, another Dishabille; in a Word, we should grow fantastical, and become as those of whom 'tis said: They have no Conduct; that is to say, They know not what they would be at.

Violetta. You have said nothing of Conduct in Business.

Angelica. It is however altogether necessary, and not to be dispensed with, unless we would be entirely ruined.

Lucinda. At least by those who are not over-rich.

Angelica. However rich we may be, we should practise Oeconomy, and proportion our Expences to our Finances, make Allowance for those Exigences which we do not immediately foresee, endeavour to save something at the Year's End, and rather deny ourselves what we want, than borrow.

Melasma. From what you have said, Madam, it appears to me, that we should necessarily have Judgment.

Angelica. It is a thousand Times more requisite than Wit, and 'tis in this Judgment, that good Conduct consists, which make us amiable in the Sight of the better Part of the World.

Lucinda. But this Conduct seems to me to be only an Art, which points out to us, what is most worthy our Attention, so that I see nothing essential in it, nor do I take it to be really meritorious.

Angelica. Without the Possession of true Merit and essential Virtues, we can never steer our Conduct by the Rules of Reason; and the subduing and opposing our Inclinations is no small Degree of Merit.

DIALOGUE XXVII.

On GRATITUDE.

Corinna. **T**HERE are many Persons who will own they are not without some Faults, but I never found any that would confess themselves ungrateful.

Euphemia. I am not at all surprized at it, for that

that would be to acknowledge themselves of a corrupt Mind.

Julia. It is however too plain, that there is very little Gratitude in the World.

Corinna. Is it possible, Madam? Nothing can surely be a greater Disgrace to human Nature, than to want it.

Julia. Very true, but human Nature is greatly defective.

Euphemia. Nothing however appears to me more natural, than to testify a due Sense of Favours received, or Services done to us.

Julia. There are few but in the Instant they receive any Favour, will acknowledge some Obligation: But this Sentiment is not of long Duration, the Service is forgot, and oftentimes we shall have the Misfortune to live with those we have served, as under Obligations to them.

Euphemia. This is a very unjust way of Thinking; I would have my whole Life continually employed in shewing my Gratitude.

Corinna. I think now you carry the Point a little too far, for it may so happen that I may be obliged to a Person with whom it would be insupportable to hold a continual Correspondence.

Euphemia. That would be a great Pity.

Corinna. True, but this may frequently be the Case.

Euphemia. What can we do upon such an Occasion?

Julia. Whether you conform to the Laws of Honour, profess the Gratitude you owe that Person, do her all the Service in your Power, or never disoblige her; you see by all this, that these are Chains which confine us, and for this Reason I am obliged to tell you, that it is often very burdensome to us.

Euphemia. You have a sad Opinion of the Mind of Man.

Julia. Because I know them by my own Experience, and that of others.

Sophronia. For my Part, I can never think myself grateful enough: There is nothing but what I could do with Pleasure, for those who have obliged me; they are every Thing to me: I esteem them above all my Friends and nearest Relations.

Julia. These Sentiments denote a good Heart, but you carry them to too great Lengths.

Euphemia. Can we indulge too much a Sentiment so rational and truly noble?

Julia. Yes, you may, if you don't contain it within the Bounds of Reason and Discretion.

Corinna. 'Tis carrying the Matter too far, to say you esteem those who have obliged you, above your Friends and Relations.

Julia. Indeed, it may happen that a Person finds an Occasion of serving you, and embraces it: You should acknowledge it; but not in such a Manner, as to prefer the Obligation to Affinity and Friendship.

Euphemia. I think I should so far carry my Acknowledgements, that I should esteem no Friends like those who had obliged me, and should hate their Enemies.

Julia. We should hate nobody, and all Sentiments of Anger are unjustifiable, and if they were not, they should be corrected.

Euphemia. You puzzle me greatly, Madam; I thought it was impossible to have too much Gratitude.

Corinna. I know very well it would be very indifferently looked upon, if it was to cause us to fail in our Duty; as we should certainly do, if we were to prefer a Person who had done us a Kindness, to a Father, a Sister, an old Friend, &c.

Euphemia.

Euphemia. You will allow, however, that nothing is so base as Ingratitude.

Julia. I do indeed, but can there be a more palpable Instance of this Crime than preferring any one to a Father, or a Mother?

Sophronia. And you would not then esteem a Person, who should carry their Acknowledgements so far?

Julia. No for certain, nor would any Body else esteem them; it is requisite that the Virtue should be regulated.

Sophronia. But that is a Sentiment of which I must own I am not Mistress.

Corinna. You must endeavour to be so, and not run into one Extreme, to avoid another.

Julia. I believe sincerely, that this is the real Sentiment of *Sophronia*, whose Disposition is admirable; but I can't think so of every Body else: Such Sentiments as these are often the Effects of Art, and the Vanity of appearing noble-minded.

Euphemia. I must confess, I cannot easily comprehend that our Acknowledgements can be carried too far, how forcible soever your Arguments appear.

Julia. That which destroys Justice, Religion and Reason exceeds its proper Bounds, and cannot be stiled a Virtue.

Corinna. What! Can Gratitude make us deficient in any other Duty? We must then be necessarily led away by a false, or mistaken Idea of Generosity.

Sophronia. I take it to consist, in hating the Enemies of my Benefactors, in loving their Friends, in opposing their Competitors, and much more their Successors.

Julia. This Virtue certainly renders you guilty of very great Injustice, for the Person who hath obliged

obliged you, may be to blame in all these Instances.

Sopbronia. I can see no Fault in those who oblige me.

Corinna. You then must love them better than yourself. For if you have any Sense, you must needs know you sometimes act amiss.

Julia to Sopbronia. You have too much Sense not to see when you commit an Error; all the Virtues must needs be regulated and practised with Moderation: To be perpetually giving, is Prodigality, and not Liberality; never to give at all, is Avarice, and not Oeconomy; to suffer those entrusted to our Care to be disorderly, is Neglect and Baseness, not Patience and Candour; and so of all the rest, too tedious to recite.

Euphemia. Whither will your Arguments lead us at last, to Ingratitude?

Julia. I should be very sorry if they did, for Ingratitude is detestable, and proceeds from a Meanness of Spirit truly despicable: Nothing can be lovelier, or more worthy our Practice than Gratitude, and a Benefit should certainly never be forgot; but 'tis my Opinion, that our Gratitude should be restrained to its due Limits, and proportioned to the Obligations we receive, and that one Virtue should never destroy the Efficacy of another.

Corinna. It would be unjust to hate the Person who succeeds your Benefactor; for some body or other must necessarily succeed.

Sopbronia. I could not look upon them with Satisfaction.

Julia. They might remind you, perhaps, of the Person who had obliged you; but you should not, however, look upon 'em with Disgust. *Sopbronia* and *Euphemia* have sufficiently testified their good Intentions; but they cannot deny but
we

we are in the right, and that Gratitude should not be confined like other Virtues, which become Excesses, when they exceed their proper Bounds.

DIALOGUE XXVIII.

On GOOD-BREEDING.

Eudocia. **W**HAT is meant, by saying: Such an one has Good-Breeding? I know not whether it be an Encomium, or a Reflection.

Melliora. You give me a great deal of Pleasure, Madam, by introducing this Topic of Discourse, for I have been a great while perplexed with this Term; which I often find very ill applied.

Lucretia. What then doth Breeding mean?

Lucilla. I think it consists in having a Mind above our Fortune, and in striving to exalt ourselves by Merit.

Melliora. What! Should we seek to be above our Parents?

Lucilla. Yes, and set no Bounds to our Ambition.

Lucretia. But this Aim is to no Purpose; for we shall be always indebted to them for our Birth, and consequently not at all above them.

Lucilla. We may arrive at Honours and Dignities, which will set us above our Parents.

Melliora. Your Ideas are very well adapted to our Times, when we see Footmen in Coaches, and Gentlemen on Foot: These Footmen, then, Madam, have Breeding.

Lucilla. Certainly, and in my Opinion, there is nothing more commendable.

Leonora. I think quite differently, for I have
always

always regarded such Persons with Contempt, on Account of their Insolence.

Melliora. I could more easily excuse their Insolence, than their want of Breeding.

Eudocia. Wherein then do you make Breeding consist?

Melliora. To have Good-Breeding, is to prefer Virtue to every Thing else, to know how to dispence with Riches, when they elude our Pursuit, and not to suffer them to engross our Attention, when they are in our Power; to share them with the distressed, and never to look upon the unhappy with Contempt; to make ourselves worthy to possess what we have, without wishing for more than becomes our Condition.

Lucilla. Would you then refuse a Place that should be offered you, because it is above you?

Melliora. No, but if I was to obtain Preferment in that manner, it would not be called Breeding.

Eudocia. What then is now called Breeding?

Melliora. A boundless Ambition, that aspires to be richer, and more powerful than the greatest Lords; that prides itself, in being profuse even to Prodigality, and purchasing Places possessed by Persons to whom we have not the Liberty of speaking, marrying into their Families, in supporting a House and Equipage, wherein every Thing appears magnificent but its Owner.

Leonora. I should esteem all this but Folly.

Melliora. I always thought it so too; this, however, is what the World now calls Breeding, and the Man is despised, who aims no higher than to be of his Father's Trade, and contents himself with a moderate Competency; who lives regularly, and within Bounds, who considers himself but as he really is, and thinks there are many People above him.

Leonora. This is the Picture of true Wisdom.

Lucilla. How

Lucilla. How! If Fortune should please to exalt me, if my Superiors should offer me Wealth and Honours, Would it be Wisdom to refuse them?

Melliora. No but to be sensible, that neither Fortune, nor your Superiors can give you any other Birth than your own, you may make Advantage of it, but should not abuse it; since in spite of Fortune there are many miserable who are in Birth above you.

Lucilla. You must suppose then that I sprung from the very Dregs of the People, for if I am nobly born, the Difference will be only in how much greater or lesser a Degree.

Melliora. There are Degrees of Nobility; we should consider ourselves as what we really are; we can only rise by our Merit, which is alone true Breeding.

Lucretia. Wherein do you place this Merit?

Leonora. I take it to consist in seeing all Things in their proper Light, in not esteeming them above their Value, in being above all Conditions, and observing such a Conduct as may sufficiently evince, that the State in which we are placed has not turned our Brain.

Lucilla. If you were born to be a Soldier, would you not wish to be a Marshal of France?

Leonora. I should perhaps wish to acquit myself to the best of my Ability in my Profession that I might arrive at that Honour.

Lucilla. And would you not condemn a Design so disproportioned to our Condition?

Leonora. I have already told you, I think, that to endeavour to deserve Promotion is true good Breeding, and I will conclude this Discourse by a very agreeable Representation: A Man of no Education goes thro' all the Degrees in War, and by his Merit comes to be a General, after which,
having

having a Dispute with a great Nobleman, he reproaches him with his Meanness of Birth, telling him he shews his Breeding, and that he came from a Dunghil; upon which the other answer'd, true, I know I came from nothing, and I am persuaded, if you had been born as I was, you would not have been what I am now!

Eudocia. Don't you think such an Answer too bold?

Leonora. If any Thing can set us on an Equality with those above us, it is the having more Courage than they have.

D I A L O G U E XXIX.

On GENEROSITY.

Sophia. **I** AM overjoy'd that we are all Five met together to have the Pleasure of entering into Discourses, from which I find we have always reap'd some Benefit.

Chariclea. We should be highly to blame if we did not improve the Pains taken with us, by a diligent Application to the Instruction given us.

Teresa. And by reducing it to Practice whenever Occasion presents itself.

Alinda. In my Opinion we know already more than we are able to practise, and that there are some Virtues calculated only for the Great.

Sophia. What are those Virtues then?

Alinda. Generosity, for Instance: How can we be generous, who have more Need of receiving Gifts than Power to bestow any?

Chariclea. It is not Fortune that can influence our Inclinations, but before we enter on the Matter

Matter in Debate, let us first inform ourselves what is meant by Generosity.

Sophia. I think it is a Greatness of Soul which places us above all Manner of Interests, Envy, &c. which induces us to commiserate the Distresses of others, and to assist them to the utmost of our Power; and renders us incapable of doing a base Action.

Alinda. I imagin'd Generosity consisted in giving freely.

Teresa. That is Liberality; but Generosity extends farther: 'Tis an Impulse of the Heart which makes it sensible of another's Misfortunes.

Chariclea. And which sometimes renders us more affected with them than with our own.

Alinda. What can you see in all that you have said of it that relates to us?

Chariclea. Every Thing; since it requires only a great and noble Mind.

Alinda. What Marks do you give of it?

Chariclea. Virtue does not consist in the outward Proof given of it: Those are indeed the Distinctions of Virtue; but it is within its Existence must be found, and we are as well able as others to be above lucrative Vices, and Envy, and incapable of Meanness.

Teresa. What Kind of Meanness do you speak of?

Sophia. Of such as proceeds from Interest, of the Flatteries we bestow on those whose Services we solicit of such servile Officiousness, as induces to suffer ourselves to be trod under Foot by those in Favour.

Olympia. I am delighted to hear you speak, Madam: You give me Reason to think that I am generous, for I can't endure Favourites, and am only fond of the Unfortunate, and 'tis enough that a
Person

Person be belov'd by the King, or indulg'd by Fortune to make me hate him.

Teresa. I knew one who shar'd his Food and his Apparel with the Necessitous, and when they were able to do without him he could endure them no longer.

Chariclea. That can't be call'd Generosity ; 'tis rather a Sort of Envy.

Teresa. How ! is it Envy to give away our Food and Raiment ?

Chariclea. There is some Degree of Tenderness and Compassion in giving away our Food and Raiment : But 'tis certainly Envy not to love those who no longer need our Assistance ; it argues a Desire of appearing above them ; and there is nothing in such a Sentiment worthy to be stiled Generosity

Olympia. You cannot say that of me ; I have no Manner of Interest in my Thoughts, and in hating those in Favour.

Sophia. I am afraid tho' there is a little Envy in it ; but there is at least an Opposition very inconsistent with Generosity.

Olympia. You would have me then make my Court to a Statesman who enjoys nothing above me but the Favour of his Master ?

Chariclea. If his Master is yours, you ought to reverence his Choice, and not speak disrespectfully of his Minister.

Olympia. I take no greater Pleasure than in opposing such a one ; and I think it a Point of Generosity so to do.

Alinda. Such a Conduct cannot be accus'd of Baseness and Interest.

Chariclea. No, but it stands charged with Imprudence, Falshood, Injustice, Opposition, and a Singularity which ought never to be indulg'd.

Olympia. We must distinguish ourselves and not appear singular ; that is what I can't comprehend.

Teresa.

Teresa. We should not be fond of Singularity in our Conduct; we sufficiently distinguish ourselves in fulfilling our Duty.

Olympia. And it is then my Duty to fawn upon such Wretches! Never can I avoid shewing my Aversion to them.

Alinda. Such a Maxim can be but little approv'd: Tho' I confess I think there is some Virtue in it.

Sophia. Virtue is never to be carried to such Extreams; it honours those who are honour'd by the Prince; it endeavours to be in Favour with them as well thro' Respect as Prudence; it would not have us make them Enemies to us, or those belonging to us; it would not purchase Favour by the least Baseness, by flattering what is blameable, by professing a Friendship we are Strangers to, by being too officious in our Services; in a Word, it acts with single Sincerity in every Respect.

Olympia. 'Tis this Simplicity and Medium that I cannot endure: I have too great a Spirit to be guided only by the Example of others: I am ever fond of Novelty; I sometimes build Castles in the Air to divert my Fancy: And resolve to leave my Country, my Family, and my King, and go thro' the World in Search of a virtuous Prince whom I wish to serve.

Chariclea. If he was endued with real Virtue and good Sense, he would despise you, and put no Confidence in you.

Olympia. Why so?

Chariclea. Because those who are wanting in their Duty, and in requiting Obligations, are not to be depended upon.

Olympia. I am not a Slave, but free, and at my own Disposal.

Sophia. You are in your own Country, with your Family, and in the Service of your King, and you would

would fail in your Duty to all those to go in Search of what you ought not ; we should never bear Arms against our King ; we should on the contrary serve our Country.

Olympia. You were born for Slavery, Ladies, and for Virtues too limited and troublesome : You talk of nothing but Moderation and discharging our Duty. What Splendour and Noise can such a Conduct be expected to make in the World ; and where is the Glory of a Person's confining themselves to such rigid Duty ?

Chariclea. We should never depart from it, and herein is the only true and substantial Merit.

Olympia. I entertain quite a different Idea of Merit, and I can never be persuaded to love those who are in a Station above me.

Chariclea. That Idea is false ; both Reason and Religion require us to respect the Authority of Princes, and every other Authority establish'd for our Government.

Olympia. Don't you think however there is more Grandeur in my Notions ?

Sophia. 'Tis a false Grandeur, void of Rule or Reason, and widely distant from true Generosity, which can submit to every Thing, however great our Spirit may be.

Olympia. Can we have a high Spirit and be capable of Submission ?

Chariclea. True Nobility is seated in the Soul, and doth not consist in opposing all Rules, Customs, and Dignities : Generosity sympathizes with and relieves the Unhappy, and never injures any one.

Olympia. As soon as I hear that any one is in Disgrace, I immediately seek and make a Friend of that Person.

Sophia. You only say this for Disputation-Sake ; it is impossible you should think as you speak.

Alinda.

Alinda. Would you have one then triumph over and insult their Misery?

Sophia. No, I would continue to be their Friend if I was so before their Disgrace, and would give them Consolation and Assistance: But would never seek their Alliance merely for the Sake of being Partners in their Exile; such a Conduct argues more a Spirit of Envy and Contradiction than of Generosity.

Chariclea. True Virtue is always void of Affectation; it shares the Grievs of its Friends, it comforts them, it sympathizes even with those it is a Stranger to; but it never piques itself upon making a Friendship with a Person only, because he is out of Favour at Court: Such Sentiments are erroneous and splanetic, and Virtue never destroys the Influence of Reason.

Olympia. We have been accustom'd to submit at the Close of our Conversations; but I must own, Ladies, that you have not made me a Convert to your Opinion, and your Wisdom and Sagacity is quite inconsistent with that Desire that reigns in me of doing something new that may be talked of.

Sophia. This may bring upon you the Blame of all the World, and numberless unforeseen Inconveniences.

Olympia. I think there can be no greater Hardship than to be debarred from ever pursuing our Inclinations.

Chariclea. I am of Opinion, that there can be no Satisfaction like that of having nothing to reproach ourselves with: But, Madam, we are in Hopes that Time and Experience will have greater Power over you than we, and that you will one Day yield to their irresistible Influence.

DIALOGUE XXX.

On PRECEDENCE.

Narcissa. I HAVE often heard say, that all Stations in Life are confounded with each other; I don't clearly comprehend the Meaning of that Expression.

Lauriana. I will explain it to you with Pleasure, for Nobody is more uneasy at this Confusion than myself.

Narcissa. I shall be greatly obliged to you.

Lauriana. When it is said that all Stations are confounded, it is with great Truth, for we find none contented with their own, every Body aspires to be as great as their Superiors: The Gentleman ranks himself with the Lord; the Prince would be as powerful as any that are above him, and so of the rest.

Cleomelia. But why then should there be such a Difference? And when a Person is born a Gentleman, why should he submit to another of a greater House, because he is possessed of a more ample Fortune or higher Post of Honour than himself?

Lauriana. We do not submit to Appearance, but in Reality: And there is even a public Opinion of which we must stand the Test.

Eliza. I don't understand what is this public Opinion.

Narcissa. It is, as I amagine, whatever the World believes and says of us, and which passes for Truth, tho' it doth not appear so to be.

Cynthia. But now, Madam, please to tell us what are the confused Stations wherein you wish to see a better Regulation.

Lauriana.

Lauriana. It is certain that God placed Men in various Conditions, and if they were wise they would not desire to change them, since he instituted none but what were laudable.

Narcissa. Do you esteem the Condition of a Peasant very honourable?

Lauriana. It is greatly so; since we cannot do without them; how should we be able to live if there were none to till the Ground and gather in the Corn?

Narcissa. I allow it to be a necessary Station, but a very mean one.

Eliza. It is requisite that all Kind of Business should be done, and in this Station as well as others 'tis Merit is the true Distinction.

Cynthia. What Merit can there be in a Peasant, except that of doing his Work well?

Lauriana. The same as in other Employments, which is to live reputably and honestly: There is scarcely a Village but has some Peasant in it remarkable for his Probity, and in whom all the rest confide; they may have Wit and good Sense.

Cynthia. Have you conversed much with them?

Lauriana. Frequently.

Cynthia. I should be greatly ashamed to be seen talking with a Peasant.

Eliza. Such an Idea would besit a Child that had never seen or known any Thing of the World; the King would speak to them freely, and I am pretty sure has conversed with them on several Occasions.

Narcissa. Do you think them then Objects worthy Conversation like ours?

Lauriana. No, we should talk to them of what concerns them, of their Business, their Families, the Produce of the Earth, and you will on these Topics find them extremely sensible and eloquent.

Narcissa. Pray describe to us the several Degrees in all Conditions.

Lauriana.

Lauriana. The different Artificers in Places of Consequence, such as Cities and Corporations, are again very necessary and honourable, and in them we find that good Sense I have been speaking of: We have also Merchants, who are serviceable to the Community and to Trade, and consist of Burgessees, Sheriffs, and Magistrates who govern the Cities and prevent Disorders: There are likewise Bankers for the Care and Security of our Fortunes.

Eliza. There are also Attornies who make out the necessary Writings that the Judges may be the better acquainted with our Proceedings.

Lauriana. Sollicitors that plead for us.

Eliza. Counsellors and Judges that decide our Cause.

Cleomelia. And all these you have mentioned are superior or inferior in Degree one to the other.

Lauriana. Yes, the Attorney is inferior to the Solicitor, the Solicitor to the Counsellor, the Counsellor to the Judge, and so of the rest.

Cleomelia. I don't think there is so much Difference in Nobility, and for my Part, if a Person is born a Gentleman, it matters not in my Opinion of what Degree.

Eliza. There are many Degrees of Nobility. Some Dignities are of ancient Date; some supported by great Fortunes, some by grand Alliances; others again have had Honours conferred on them, and these are all different Ranks of Precedence.

Cleomelia. Notwithstanding all these Distinctions, the most noble are those whose Nobility is of longest Standing.

Eliza. That is very true, strictly speaking; it is nevertheless true that we should submit to Precedency, and that a Gentleman that can produce Proofs of his Nobility for five hundred Years past, must

must give Place to a Marshal of *France* tho' of a less ancient Family.

Narcissa. I can easily be prevailed upon to submit to the Favourites of Fortune.

Lauriana. Fortune frequently bears a great Part in these Exaltations, and the King's Pleasure likewise; he delights in rewarding Merit; exciting Emulation, testifying his Approbation of those who are Praise-worthy, and he that is wise will cheerfully submit to these, in Compliance with established Custom.

Cleomelia. We shall be obliged to submit to Power, but you must confess that is not altogether agreeable.

Eliza. The whole World is involved in Disorder; if you refuse to submit to those above you, those who are in a Station beneath you will also refuse to submit to you, your Inferiors will exalt themselves over you, nay, the very Peasant will dispute your Passage and your Place in the Church.

Lauriana. If you alone were to submit the Hardship would be great indeed, but as you give Place to the Governor of your Province, he must do the same to the Peer, the Peer to the Prince, the Prince to a greater than himself, the greatest Prince to the King, and the King to the Laws and Customs, but in a more especial Manner to the Will of God.

Cleomelia. What Distinction is there among Princes?

Eliza. As in Nobility, the most ancient of the royal Houses are not always the first in Rank. But as it is difficult to determine their Pre-eminence, they avoid as much as possible being seen together.

Cynthia. If the several Kings were to meet together how would they manage?

Eliza. They would never do this without a previous Agreement in regard to Ceremonials, that

is to say, the Manner in which they would be treated.

Lauriana. There are among Kings and Princes different Degrees of Grandeur, Power, and Extent of Dominions.

Eliza. The King of *Portugal* would not dispute the Precedence with the King of *Spain*.

Lauriana. Nor the King of *Denmark* with the King of *France*.

Cynthia. Which are the chief Kingdoms?

Eliza. *France*, *Spain*, and *England*.

Cynthia. And which is the greatest of these Three?

Lauriana. That is undecided between them, but we have seen our King yield to the *Spanish* Monarch, and we see him every Day place the King of *England* above him.

Cynthia. And doth he acknowledge them both greater than himself?

Eliza. No, but he pays them Respect, in the same Manner as private Persons do to each other.

Cynthia. But, which is in Reality the greatest?

Eliza. It is certain that, without Prejudice or Partiality, the greatest House that we know is that of *Bourbon*, under which we are at present governed.

DIALOGUE. XXXI.

ON GOOD BEHAVIOUR.

Amanda. I WOULD willingly be advised concerning an Affair I heard mentioned the other Day: It was said of a Person that she was well behaved.

Violetta. I don't rightly understand what that means.

Lucetta.

Lucetta. Doth it not imply she carried herself with a good Grace?

Charlotte. A graceful Carriage doth indeed contribute to good Behaviour, but I think that this Commendation is of a more extensive Import.

Amanda. Please to explain it then, Madam, if you understand it.

Charlotte. I take it to be a Demeanour, Countenance, and Air adapted to the Company or Place we happen to be in.

Violetta. You are in the right in saying it is a very extensive Commendation, and if you will describe it to us, you will afford us a very serviceable Instruction.

Charlotte. Do you not allow that there are Times for Joy and Sorrow, for Freedom and Respect, and some Persons to whom we owe more Submission than to others?

Amanda. You know that Examples are always necessary to illustrate your Assertions.

Charlotte. Suppose then, for Instance, you were with a Person in Trouble, it could not be agreeable to wear an Air of Gaity, that would be ill Behaviour.

Lavinia. At Church we should be sedate, and when walking in a Garden less reserved.

Amanda. It is very easy to accommodate our Tempers to those above us, and to regulate our Actions by their Will when we know their Dispositions; But how must we accost them if we do not know them?

Charlotte. With a serious Air.

Lucetta. I have frequently heard Children directed to wear always a gay and chearful Countenance.

Charlotte. This Maxim in my Opinion is very erroneous, and nothing can make one look more like a Fool than to be always smiling.

Lavinia. I knew a Woman of a great Wit, who was so much Mistress of her Behaviour, and observed so well an Air of Reserve, that her Acquaintance would never allow that she had any Wit, notwithstanding she really possessed it; they on the contrary ridiculed her, and her Children and Servants used to say, that they were ready to laugh at her even while she was scolding them.

Violetta. Is it not as much out of Character to approach one with a sorrowful Look that is disposed to be gay, as to laugh in the Presence of the Afflicted?

Charlotte. We should never accost any one with an Air of Sorrow or of Gaiety, but with a serious Look, which is the Rule of Good-Behaviour; and then we may easily accommodate ourselves to the Humour of those with whom we have Concerns.

Amanda. This Good-Behaviour then consists in Reserve.

Charlotte. It is highly necessary; there are, as I have already told you, different Sorts of Behaviour with respect of the Place we are in: Gaiety in our Pleasures, Respect to our Superiors and great People, Freedom with our Equals, and Familiarity with our Inferiors; and all these Rules are to be observed in Moderation.

Lavinia. There is again a Medium requisite to be regarded between too great Timidity and an opposite Boldness; young Ladies should be cautious of offending, but yet not appear disconcerted, nor should they stand like Statues, as if they had nothing to say for themselves.

Violetta. You will allow a Woman then when she is grown up to be more bold?

Lavinia. I could never endure Confidence in a Woman; Modesty is the most becoming Ornament of our Sex: But it is certain, that Time and Experience make a great Alteration in us,
and

and that nothing is more different than the De-meanour of an old Woman and a young one.

Amanda. Wherein doth this Difference consist?

Charlotte. A Woman in Years is more sedate and solid, she introduces Topics of Conversation, asks Questions, gives her Opinion, supports it by reasonable Arguments, and sometimes decides in Matters of Importance.

Amanda. And how would you have the young one employed?

Charlotte. She should be silent, and give Attention, answer only to what Questions are asked her, give her Advice, if required, with the greatest Caution, she should never assert any Thing positively, and even when she is pretty certain she is in the right, she should say: *It appears to me to be so, I believe so, that is my Opinion, &c.*

Amanda. You will not allow her to dispute the least in the World?

Charlotte. Much rather than she should be positive. We may argue for Instruction, and with an Air of pleasing Uncertainty, whereas Obstinacy in our Opinion is disagreeable.

Violetta. And all this you include under the Article of Good-Behaviour? You are much in the right in saying it is extensive.

Charlotte. It extends farther than I am able to describe: Good-Behaviour in Conversation consists in Modesty and Attention; in being never angry, nor too conceited, and always Mistresses of our Conduct.

Lavinia. Nothing contributes so much to Good-Behaviour as Modesty, which induces us to be diffident of our ourselves and our Opinions, and to give them only as our own, without requiring others to coincide with them.

Lucetta. I thought Modesty consisted in a downward Look.

Charlotte. That is indeed a Token of Modesty, but we ought rather to shew it in our Actions than our outward Appearance.

Lucetta. You will permit us then to lift up our Eyes?

Charlotte. Yes, certainly, we must lift them upward to see any Object, and we should seem to want Respect, if we were not to look upon the Person to whom we direct our Discourse.

Amanda. We may then look at a Man if we have a Mind to see him?

Lavinia. It were to be wished that we never were to have such an Inclination; and I must own it gives me great Disgust to hear one of our Sex say: *Such a Man is agreeable or odious, he has fine Eyes, a wide Mouth, a handsome Nose, &c.*

Lucetta. *Charlotte* however says 'tis unmannerly not to look at the Person we are talking to.

Charlotte. There is a deal of Difference tho' between lifting up our Eyes in Compliance with good Manners, and regarding a Man stedfastly, examining his Features, his Cloaths, and all his whole Person.

Violetta. I knew one of our Sex, who, after passing several Days in Company with a Man, did not know what Sort of Cloths he had on.

Lavinia. She was to be commended, and I would have my Daughter to be every whit as incurious.

Lucetta. Would you not allow her to look at Women?

Charlotte. That is necessary enough, and can indeed produce no bad Effects, we cannot hinder their Curiosity and Attention to their Shape and Drefs.

Amanda. Describe to us now an Ill-Behaviour.

Charlotte. A Person may be said to behave ill when she seems uneasy, is always restless, gapes about her, is inattentive to those with whom she converses,

converses, is continually running in and out with-Reason, inquisitive to know the Cause of the least Noise that stirs, sits in unbecoming Postures, and in every Thing appears to consult her own Ease alone.

Amanda. We ought to remember this Description, in order to avoid resembling it.

Charlotte. True, and I take Good-Behaviour to consist in Tranquillity, Attention to others, and acting in every Respect as entirely Mistresses of our Conduct.

Amanda. Such a Behaviour is very difficult to a Person of Spirit and Vivacity.

Charlotte. Good-Behaviour doth not oppose Vivacity and innocent Enjoyments; but these should be confined within the Bounds of Modesty and Discretion.

Lucetta. We do not easily yield to Timidity: Some are naturally bold, others more reserved and cautious.

Lavinia. Those that are bold shew a Want of Judgment: We should conceal such a Defect, and appear as reserved as possible, in speaking seldom, being backward in giving our Opinion, and always governing our Passions, as unruly Horses are restrained with a Curb, that they may not run away with us.

Violetta. I never thought Good-Behaviour would have afforded us so many useful Instructions as we have received on that Subject.

DIALOGUE XXXII.

On MYSTERY.

Silvia. **W**E have been instructed in several Subjects; but there is one which I don't remember to have heard mentioned: That is Mystery.

Euphemia. I should be extremely glad to see it practised, for nothing is more pleasing to me than a mysterious Air.

Sophronia. I am of your Opinion, for nothing can certainly be more disagreeable, than to speak all we think and conceal nothing.

Silvia. I am of quite a different Way of Thinking, and I would have every one appear free, tho' they be ever so capable of keeping a Secret.

Sophronia. What! Will you not then allow it to be amiable to speak little, suffering others to talk, and shewing by your Looks that you know more than they do?

Corinna. You can't think so, Madam; and tho' you give us this Picture of an amiable Character, such a one would not be well received in Company.

Euphemia. You would rather esteem a communicative Person, that tells all she knows, conceals nothing, nor requires any thing to be kept secret, and whose Conduct is entirely open and unreserved?

Silvia. Yes, I should like such an one better: But I place a great Difference between Secrecy and Mystery.

Corinna. There are very few Mysteries innocent: Since if we do no ill, What should we want to conceal?

Euphemia. And why do you suppose, that what we would conceal is evil?

Corinna. You at least give Reason to suspect it to be so; For why should you conceal what is good or in offensive?

Sophronia. Because I am naturally inclined to be reserved, and can't endure those who are always telling what they think and do, and would discover every Thing past, present, and to come, if in their Power.

Silvia.

Sylvia. You will dispute I find, and I am pleased with it; 'tis a Means of enlightening our Understandings; but as to what you have asserted, I can't believe you to be really in earnest.

Corinna. To make a Myltery of Trifles, proceeds from a mean Spirit; if of serious Affairs, 'tis dangerous.

Sopbronia. I am asked which Way I have been walking; I take a Pleasure in concealing it from those who enquire, and tell them quite a different Way.

Sylvia. In so doing you greatly endanger your Reputation; for as soon as they discover you have told them an Untruth, they immediately conclude you have been fulfilling an Assignment.

Corinna. I should be very sorry, indeed, if you actually were so fond of Mystery as you pretend; for 'tis a great Misfortune, especially to our Sex.

Silvia. It can never be thought we have no Motive for Secrecy; and even if we are mysterious in innocent Matters, it will be deemed, that we are only so for the sake of a better Opportunity to conceal a Crime hereafter.

Euphemia. An Acquaintance lends me a Book, and entreats that I would not let any Body see it; Would you have me deceive that Person who entrusted me?

Corinna. She has an Intention to deceive you in being so reserved, and therefore deserves that you should deceive her: But I should rather refuse to be entrusted by her, and tell her I can't conceal it, and that the making such a Secret of it gives me Room to suspect her Sincerity.

Euphemia. Must I then act all my Life like a Child, without ever being entrusted with any Thing?

Silvia. Some Kinds of Confidence are very dangerous; others again are honourable.

Sophronia. How do you make all these Distinctions? You represent Life as one-continued Series of Constraint.

Silvia. It is not I that impose such Constraint, but the Malignity of Mankind with whom we live, and the Necessity of preserving our Reputation, of which we sufficiently experience the good Effects by the Esteem we acquire by our Circumspection.

Euphemia. Let us return to those Distinctions of Confidence you have observed.

Silvia. You are entrusted with an Affair of Importance from an Opinion of your Secrecy; you ought therefore to keep it so secret, that nobody may suspect you are acquainted with it.

Sophronia. I would not disclose it; But why is it so material, that none should know I were acquainted with it?

Silvia. That is exactly the Difference between a Secret and a Mystery; if we conceal an Affair in this Manner, it is a Secret, but if you signify you are entrusted with, it is only a Mystery.

Corinna. This is a very bad Character; we cannot be too suspicious of those who entrust us with such Secrets as don't deserve the Name, and require our Confidence, by imposing upon us as Secrets the most inconsiderate Trifles.

Silvia. We cannot be too communicative of what doth not deserve to be concealed, nor too faithful and close in keeping a Secret.

Sophronia. But 'tis not only in what is told me that I love Mystery, but in Regard to what ever I think, or do, and I hardly ever tell what I did Yesterday, or shall do To-morrow, at what Hour I dined, what Ribband I shall put on, &c.

Euphemia. Indeed, why should we give an Account of all our Concerns? Nothing appears to me more childish, (not to say foolish) than that mistaken Ingenuity of telling all our Thoughts.

Corinna.

Corinna. I should be greatly ashamed to see you behave in such a Manner, but that I think it is common to Children so to do.

Sophronia. 'Tis such a Behaviour as you require that is childish; Persons in Years never tell what they do, much less what they think: They are more secret, and mysterious, and I should be sorry to have nothing to conceal.

Corinna. God grant you may be always of such an Opinion, you will enjoy perfect Tranquillity, nobody will complain of you, or say you have ever divulged a Secret, or discovered a Mystery, you will have no Acknowledgements to offer, Affronts to put up, or Apologies to make; those Persons in Years you speak of are prudent, and discreet, but they are neither mysterious, nor solicitous to have Secrets imparted to them.

Silvia. They are however often very troublesome, and we frequently find People so little able to be secret, that after exacting of you the utmost Fidelity, they immediately trust the same Secret to others, much less apt to be reserved.

Euphemia. That is the very Reason why I observed that Secrets and Mysteries are attended with many Inconveniencies.

Sophronia. Should we then refuse to be entrusted with them?

Corinna. That is according to the Tempers of those with whom we have to deal: If they are ignorant People, we should not listen to their Secrets; but if prudent, we should hearken to them, and be careful to keep them; but we should never be inquisitive, nor anxious to know them, nor be fond of being flattered for Confidence reposed in us; for such a Confidence is often the Effect of Imprudence, rather than any real Esteem the Persons have for us who entrust us with the Secret.

Silvia. Upon the Whole, we may conclude, that much Wisdom is required in order to obtain a good Reputation,

Reputation, and to conduct ourselves in such manner, as to secure universal Applause and Esteem in the World.

DIALOGUE XXXIII.

On FRIENDSHIP.

Melliora. I AM as sorry for the Quarrel that has happened between *Isabella* and *Jacyntha*, as if I had an Interest in their Concerns, notwithstanding I am equally a Stranger to both of them.

Eliza. And what have you then to do with their Dispute?

Melliora. It makes me uneasy to see it. What! after a Friendship of four Years standing, to fall out and turn it all into Hatred.

Lucretia. A Friendship of four Years! We need not be surprized at it when we frequently find them broken off after continuing for twenty or thirty Years; there are in short but too many Instances of it.

Melliora. You discourage me beyond Measure; Must we then live without Friends?

Lucretia. This is the surest and safest Way.

Eliza. We are naturally inclined to Friendship and Unity.

Lucretia. The Dispositions of the Mind are not sufficient to inspire Friendship: We must conduct them with Propriety, and endeavour to regulate their Motions, or at least to keep them within Bounds.

Eliza. And when we have done all we must be obliged to live without Friendship, or Confidence, and in a State of Indifference with all the World?

Melliora. That is to renounce the greatest and most reasonable Pleasure of our Life, that has been in Use from the Beginning of Time, and will endure throughout all Ages.

Angelica.

Angelica. We shall thereby save a deal of Uneasiness from the Perfidy of false Friends, and shall behave in the same manner to our old Acquaintance as if we had never seen them before.

Lucretia. No, we should live friendly with those that we see often, and are best acquainted with, who are forward to oblige us, who do us any Service, or seem willing so to do; but I really think we are liable to many Inconveniences in too zealous an Attachment to our Friends.

Eliza. 'Tis in this Attachment which you disapprove that I place the whole Pleasure of Friendship; nothing less deserves the Name, and can only be called Society.

Lucretia. How much Time must it require to be sufficiently acquainted with a Person to trust them with all our Secrets?

Angelica. Can we enjoy a Moment's Ease when we have trusted a Friend with an important Secret?

Melliora. Is there then no one in the World you can confide in, and for whose Honour you can be answerable?

Angelica. I could scarcely answer for myself: We hardly know our own Abilities, nor what may happen to alter our Resolutions.

Lucretia. 'Tis an Act of Prudence to take Advantage of every Thing we see: What was the Subject of Dispute between these two Ladies? I had but a slight Intelligence about it:

Eliza. It happened, that *Isabella* lodging within a small Distance from *Jacintha*, they saw and were delighted with each other, and contracted in a very little Time an intimate Friendship. They were always together, their Union seemed inseparable, and this Intimacy continued near four Years. *Isabella* afterwards marrying, removed with her Husband to a different Quarter of the Town, who now occupied that Place in her Heart
where

where formerly there was no Room but for *Jacinta*. *Isabella* had been entrusted with all her Secrets, and her Husband with an Air of Pleasantry committed them to his Acquaintance: Upon the Knowledge of this, *Jacinta* enraged at the Perfidy of her Friend, resolves never more to hold Correspondence with her, and her former Love is changed to downright Aversion, nor can there be any Remedy discovered to make up the Breach.

Lucretia. Can you want a stronger Motive for disapproving such intimate Connections?

Melliora. We should only make a better Choice, and we need not always fear such gross Treachery and Perfidy.

Angelica. It is but too common; but this is not altogether of so heinous a Nature; for it doth not appear astonishing, that a Wife who loves her Husband should entrust him with all she knows.

Lucretia. Another, instead of a Husband, finds a new Friend, and imparts to her all the Secrets of the old one.

Melliora. You are really of Opinion then that there is no Person upon the Earth worthy our Confidence?

Angelica. We think indeed there are very few that can be trusted, and that it requires so many Years to experience their Fidelity, that by that Time we have found them worthy our Confidence, we shall be grown wise enough to keep our Secrets to ourselves.

Eliza. Nothing seems to me more just and reasonable than what you have asserted; agree with us only in acknowledging, that Life is extremely burdensome when our own Security obliges us to distrust all Mankind.

Lucretia. It would certainly have a much better Relish if we were more perfect; but you consider Matters too deeply; there are Degrees to be observed in Friendship: We may have Friends whom

whom we would consult in our own Affairs, we choose them to the best of our Power, we speak to them more freely than to others, we entertain each other agreeably, but to disclose to them all our Secrets, if we have any, that ought to be concealed, is not consistent with the Rules of Prudence, and such Credulity must certainly be followed by a severe Repentance, when we find our Secrets communicated abroad.

Melliora. I wish with all my Heart, that all young People were to hear what you say, for the greatest Part of them can hardly live without a Confident.

Lucretia. There is nothing more engaging, but the Consequence of such Connections are often fatal, the Mind suffers by them, our Reputation is concerned in them, we render ourselves ridiculous in our own Vindication: They occasion those Debates and Quarrels that we too often find among the Women, and those who have any Sense avoid them as much as possible.

Eliza. Young Persons have seldom such important Secrets, nor so destructive to them if revealed.

Angelica. That is very true, however they don't love to have repeated what Secrets we entrust them: And such little Breaches of Fidelity are very ungrateful to us; in short, one Party or the other is always in the Wrong.

Melliora. Provided I myself were not blameable, I could put up with any Thing.

Lucretia. Those Disputes in which we are engaged, tho' we are never so much in the right, subject us to Censure: We are called on to justify ourselves, many will lay the Blame on us; the best Way therefore is never to contend at all, and to make ourselves as little as possible the Topic of Conversation.

Eliza. I am ashamed to own myself convinced at last; nevertheless we must needs submit to the Truth.

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DIALOGUE XXXIV.

On FIDELITY.

Lucinda. **W**E were entertained the other Day with a Conversation upon Courage; we should now be glad to hear what can be said of Fidelity so frequently recommended to us.

Julia. This Word seems to me to explain itself, and I believe it will be difficult to define it any other Way.

Lucinda. If you don't chuse to define it, please to give us some Example of it, that we may thereby know its true Import.

Julia. Is it possible, Madam, that you can't comprehend what it is to transact an Affair with Fidelity, and what to betray one's Trust?

Lauriana. I understand it a little, but cannot express it.

Julia. Fidelity is always to be found in those who are mutually well inclined, Treachery is observable in those whose Minds are corrupt.

Lauriana. I must confess nothing can give me so clear an Idea of any thing as Examples.

Julia. Would you have them in general, or such as relate more particularly to ourselves?

Lucinda. I should be glad to see some of all Kinds.

Julia. Well then, Madam, I will instantly oblige you: An unfaithful Person is entrusted with a Commission; she executes it without any Regard to its Success, never observes the Nature of her Charge, nor interests herself at all in the Affair, any farther than to transact it with a literal Compliance with her Orders, whether right or wrong.

Lauriana. And how doth the faithful Deputy act?

Julia.

Julia. She listens attentively to what is said to her; wishes her Commission may prosper; and is truly diligent in the Execution of it.

Lucinda. Examples of this Nature are too general.

Julia. Now, you shall have some more circumstantial; for Instance, a Letter is given at the Gate to deliver to the Abbess in Expectation of an Answer: The trusty Person carefully seeks the Abbess, delivers the Letter, and tells her an Answer is expected; she entreats the Messenger to have a little Patience, and immediately returns to fetch the Answer; in a Word, she makes the Affair her own, and wishes to give Satisfaction both to the Abbess, and the Messenger, and is careful to do the Business she is charged with. The unfaithful Person seeks the Abbess, without caring whether she finds her or not; she is as well satisfied in returning no Answer, as the other in proving it; she gives herself no Concern about the Messenger, who for ought she cares may go back again without doing the Business. Madam *de Maintenon* orders her Coach to go abroad in; the treacherous Person repeats the Order herself, or entrusts it to another; she thinks nothing about it, and is as well pleased if the Coach is got ready two Hours too late, as at the Time required: She that regards the Execution of her Trust, takes Care to order the Coach herself, and trusts her Commission to nobody, she is uneasy if it is not instantly prepared, she returns to hasten it, and is really desirous to acquit her Charge with the utmost Punctuality.

Lauriana. Provided I should not be reproved, I should not care any farther.

Julia. Such a Conduct as that is treacherous and base; 'tis to act only to outward Appearance, and proceeds entirely from a slavish mean Principle.

Lucinda. Is Fidelity then necessary in the World?

Julia.

Julia. It is requisite every where, and in all Things: What Service would our Mistresses do, if they only take Care to make us come and go at the Sound of the Bell, without a due Regard to the Formation of our Manners? An Abbess, that should content herself with commanding her Nuns, without taking Pains in the spiritual Concerns? A Bishop, who should take upon him the Pontifical Office without ever visiting his Flock? A General of an Army, who should pay no Regard to the fulfilling his Duty in his Military Capacity? A Monarch, who should tyrannize over his Subjects without studying to make them easy and happy? All these Duties depend on that Fidelity so earnestly recommended to us.

Lauriana. This Fidelity, as you have explained it, is disadvantageous to ourselves; it induces us to make other People's Business our own.

Julia. You describe it better than I can, Madam; it consists in acting for others as we would do for ourselves.

Lauriana. And that must necessarily render us unhappy.

Julia. It will render us lovely, estimable, and renowned for Honour and Goodness; such Persons who practise it are dear to all the World.

Lauriana. It must cost them a deal of Pains and Labour.

Julia. Our Merit can never be thought too dear in the Purchase, and when we accustom ourselves betimes to do what we ought, we shall never be liable to act otherwise.

Lucinda. Is it requisite then, that I should interest myself in whatever is transacted at *St. Cyr*; that I should take Pains to have my Work well done, or to see that a Girl doth as she ought what I am to teach her? It is sufficient if I do what I am ordered.

Julia.

Julia. Your Orders are given you to be properly executed ; your Work is given you to be well done, and if you act unjustly with a premeditated Design, Can you be guilty of a more manifest Ingratitude to this Institution ?

Lucinda. It is paid already from the Good we receive from it.

Julia. But, supposing it was not to be discharged with Fidelity, if it received us only without instructing us, or forming our Minds, if it did not support us in Sickneſs, or make a Provision for us againſt our Departure : What would become of all the King's good Intentions ? You ſee then that the whole depends upon Fidelity, and that the Governeſſes of our Houſe would entirely fruſtrate the Purpoſes of the Sovereign, however laudable and well-deſigned, if they were not to execute them with the moſt punctual Fidelity.

Lauriana. Is Fidelity farther neceſſary in Matters of Religion ?

Julia. It is ſo with regard to Men, whom we have it in our Power to deceive ; but we cannot deceive God, he is not to be impoſed upon, he ſathomſ the very Depth of our Hearts, and ſees them as they really are, and utterly abhors the double-minded.

Lucinda. Are we not born to Truth or Falſhood, and can we change our Tempers ?

Julia. It is certain that ſome are born with happier Diſpoſitions than others ; but we ſhould cultivate our good Inclinations, and rectify thoſe that are evil. Nothing is impoſſible to God, and by his Help we may accompliſh every Thing.

Lauriana. We are convinced, Madam, and I hope you will ſoon ſee in our future Conduct the Fruits of this Converſation.

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Julia.

DIALOGUE XXXV.

On the Point of HONOUR.

Melafina. I HAVE often heard the Men talk of the Point of Honour, Is there any such Thing amongst the Women?

Teresa. Why not? Do you think we are not accounted susceptible of Honour?

Lucilla. We are so little regarded, that it is a Sign we are not; and when Women are any Way injured, I believe few take any Pains to vindicate them.

Teresa. I can't bear to be held in such Contempt: What can be the Reason of it?

Celia. 'Tis our own Fault, because there are few reasonable Women.

Teresa. But if these few reasonable Women were to fall out, what could be done to reconcile them?

Lucilla. If they were very reasonable, they would never fall out.

Malafina. How, Madam, do you think that impossible? And what would you do if a Person offended you?

Celia. For my Part I would put up with the Affront.

Teresa. Then you ought to be canonized for a Saint?

Celia. No, I should not deserve it, and the least Motive would induce me to do it.

Melafina. The least Motive would induce you to put up with an Injury!

Celia. What shall we get by retorting them? Will it in the least extenuate them; and must we, in order to make ourselves amends, commit a Fault as great as those who have offended us?

Melafina. I should think it inconsistent with my Honour to put up an Injury without returning it.

Lucilla. Should you be well pleased to have it again retorted by another?

Celia.

Celia. Before the King, out of his wonted Piety and Goodness, had abolished Duels, a Man could revenge himself for an Affront by fighting with the Aggressor; wherein he either killed or disarmed his Adversary, or at least acquitted himself with Honour: But Women have no better Remedy than to hold their Peace, and a void engaging in any Sort of Quarrels.

Teresa. You may have Injuries done you without giving any Occasion for them.

Lucilla. They will soon have an End, when we don't take any Notice of them.

Melafina. I should think such Forbearance would argue Want of Courage.

Celia. There is more Courage in such Forbearance, than in requiting Evil for Evil.

Laura. I am of Opinion, that People of Fortune are not so much exposed to Quarrels, and that only the inferior Class are so apt to be engaged in them.

Teresa. However good tempered we may be, it always depends on others to give us Occasion to quarrel.

Laura. We ought not to depend on others for the Regulation of our Conduct; it would be easy enough to avoid Disputes, if we could but submit to a passive Disposition, we should therefore be silent, or change the Discourse, when we find ourselves aggrieved.

Melafina. You must suppose us to have great Power over our Actions.

Lucilla. It is absolutely requisite to have it, otherwise we shall be liable to numberless Inconveniences.

Teresa. But why should I submit any more than another?

Laura. I think it the most reasonable Part to submit, and we should be well enough recompensed

pened by never being engaged in a Dispute with any Body.

Teresa. There are so many Kinds of them, that I can't see how we can avoid it.

Violetta. For Instance, How could *Seraphina* avoid what happened to her?

Lucilla. What was that?

Violetta. A Man informed her, that her Brother-in-Law had traduced her, without repeating the Aspersions he had made Use of. *Seraphina* complained highly of the Injury done to her Honour; the Brother-in-Law protested he never once thought of any such Thing; she named the Accuser, who finding himself pressed, chose rather to deny what he had said, than subject himself to the Resentment of a Family it was his Interest to oblige: He disowned therefore what *Seraphina* had advanced; and she now incurs the Suspicion of having invented a Falshood, and is for this Reason obliged to be at Variance with every Body in the House she lived in, she must therefore quit it; What Blame and Disgrace must she suffer therefore upon this Account?

Melafina. How could she avoid it? Such a Misfortune might have happened to any one.

Celia. All she has to do, is to make no Reply.

Teresa. You would have patiently submitted to the Detraction of a Brother-in-Law, and neglected the Information given her.

Lucilla. You see the Consequence of such Intelligence, by what has befallen her.

Laura. These private Incendiaries are very injurious to those to whom they communicate their Intelligence.

Melafina. I should be for giving it, and be glad of receiving it on the like Occasion.

Celia. I think we should neither do one nor the other.

Teresa. Would you hear your Friends traduced, and not advertise them of it?

Celia.

Celia. I should gently rebuke those who propagated the Slander, by telling them they did not know the Persons of whom they were talking, and should take no farther Notice of it.

Melafina. But what would you have done, had you been in *Seraphina's* Place?

Celia. I should have thanked the Person who brought the Intelligence, and have said no more about it. If the Report had any Foundation, I should have endeavoured to make Advantage of it; otherwise, I would wait with Patience till Time had defeated its Influence, as it certainly does weaken such Reports as are not founded upon Truth.

Lucilla. If *Seraphina* had pursued this Method, she would have saved herself a World of Uneasiness.

Teresa. I should have thought it necessary to have Reparation made to my Honour.

Lucilla. I never observe the Generality of People demand such a Reparation.

Laura. 'Tis true, indeed; when they are informed of Injuries done to their Character, they take Witnesses with them, and demand Satisfaction by Course of Law.

Celia. We see no such Proceeding among People of Condition.

Teresa. We should then put up with any Affront done to ourselves, or our Friends.

Lucilla. If we treat our Friends in the same Manner as ourselves, they will have no reason to complain.

Melafina. I should look upon it as a distinguishing Mark of Friendship, to be informed of whatever is done to my Prejudice, tho' it were but a Look, or the least Token of Contempt.

Celia. Such a Conduct makes us looked on as meddling Sort of People, and involves us in a World of Perplexity.

Melafina. And why will it make one appear meddling?

Celia. I know not any Thing that is so obnoxious, as to sow Discord wheresoever we go.

Lucilla. We should conceal any Thing that we know must give Displeasure, and communicate only what is agreeable, so that we may always acquit ourselves of never having made Mischief between Friends, but often reconciled and made up Breaches between them.

Melafina. I am overjoyed with this Conversation, and you have entirely destroyed those Ideas I before thought reasonable: I never imagined we ought to bear any Affront offered to ourselves, and much less to our Friends; however, you make it plainly appear, that the greatest Service we can do them, is never to engage them in any Dispute, and just in the same manner we should act in Regard to ourselves.

Lucilla. What a Happiness it is, Madam, you can submit to Reason as soon as you perceive it.

Melafina. It must be very difficult to resist the Force of your Arguments.

Celia. Weak-minded People will rather contend, than submit.

Teresa. I am absolutely determined to be passive for the future, and I am thoroughly convinced by your edifying Discourse, that we ought never to add Fuel to the Flames of Discord, but on the contrary, to extinguish and allay them to the utmost of our Power.

Lucilla. We are not far from being reasonable, Madam, when we are so sensibly affected with Truth.

Celia. And it is an Argument of a greatness of Mind, and Solidity of Understanding, when we can so easily overcome our Prejudices.



